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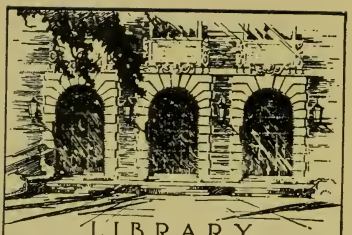

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COLIN CLINK.

VOL. III.

LONDON :
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Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

"You must be a very brutal fellow to strike your wife

COLIN CLINK.

BY CHARLES HOOTON, ESQ.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

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COLIN CLINK.

CHAPTER I.

Reappearance of an unexpected customer; together with what passed at a certain interview.

Day had pretty well broken as Colin trudged back homewards alone. It was one of those dull, leaden, misty, and chilly mornings, which in a town newly stirring from sleep seems to put the stamp and seal of melancholy upon everything external. The buildings at hand looked black,—those at a distance fused into mere shadows by the density of the windless atmosphere, — while the unextinguished lamps grew red-eyed and dim in the white light that had risen over them. Early labour-

ers were trudging to their work ; an occasional milkmaid, who looked precisely as though she had never seen a cow in the whole course of her life, banged her pail-handles, and whooped at area-gates; while bakers, who had been up nearly all night manufacturing hot rolls for that interesting portion of the community now snug in bed, slipped down the shutters of their houses leisurely, and stared lack-a-daisically upon the portents of the weather.

Altogether, it was a description of scenery by no means calculated to inspire heavy hearts with unusual joy, or to raise the spirits of any one situated as was poor Colin.

Scarcely knowing what else to do, he turned off at the top of Cheapside, and walked into a well-known coffeehouse in the immediate vicinity of the Post-office, where he ordered breakfast. Two or three tables occupied the room, at which a few early risers were sitting quaffing coffee from cups which, from their size and shape, might readily have been mistaken for

so many half-pint pots of ale. Well-fingered books were scattered about the place, and monthly magazines of all sorts, fitted into temporary covers, lay in piles upon the broad chimney-piece. Shortly afterwards the morning papers were brought in by a lad with a large bundle of them under his arm—a circumstance productive of a momentary scramble on the part of those who were anxious to possess themselves of the earliest intelligence of the day, before departing to their occupations. Colin's breakfast was introduced by a little active boy, as brisk as a sand-eel, who waited in the place; and scarcely had Colin begun stirring the mysterious-looking fluid before him with an old dingy pewter spoon, bent one way out at the bottom and the other way at top, by way, perhaps, of producing a counteracting influence, than he involuntarily started as though he had received the shock of an overcharged battery. The spoon dropped from his hand, and his hand dropped upon his

coffee-cup, and upset it. He had heard the voice of Jerry Clink in another part of the room!

It appeared to Colin, if not absolutely impossible, at least the height of improbability, that the veritable Jerry Clink himself could be there in his own proper person. There, however, he assuredly was; a fact which his grandson's eyes soon confirmed, when he peeped round a projecting corner of the room, and beheld the man with whom he had recently had so fierce a struggle sitting in his wet clothes, and minus his coat, within a very short distance of him.

For reasons sufficiently obvious, and to prevent any farther public demonstration of Jerry's temper, Colin suffered him to take his meal in quiet, and afterwards his departure, without making his own presence known to him. Anxious, however, not wholly to lose sight of him again, as the liberation of Mr. Woodruff appeared very singularly to depend

upon him, though in a manner yet unaccounted for, Colin quietly followed and dodged him along the streets, until he observed him enter an old clothes shop in the Goswell-road, from which, after a convenient lapse of time, he again emerged with a coat on, — new to the present possessor, though old in the opinion of the gentleman whose shoulders it had previously adorned.

In this manner he followed unperceived in the old man's wake, but did not venture to accost him until, after a very considerable walk, he pulled up for refreshment at a small deserted-looking public house at the rear of Islington, which appeared to offer the privacy requisite for their second meeting, and the conversation that might thereon ensue.

As Jerry had no particular desire, under present circumstances, to mingle with all such chance customers as might come in, he avoided the common drinking-room, and walked into a parlour, the air of which smelt like that of a

well some time since fumigated with tobacco smoke, that required more than ordinary time finally to make its escape. The floor was spread with coarse sand, not unlike gravel in a state of childhood; while the window looked out upon a back-yard nearly as large as an ordinary closet, and in obscurity very strongly resembling a summer twilight.

As the old man seemed inclined to stop a while, a fat untidy girl, with her hair half out of her cap, and her countenance curiously smeared with ashes and black-lead, came in to light a fire already "built" in the grate.

"Glass of ale?" demanded the girl, as she blew out her candle, and nipped the snuff with her fingers.

Jerry fixed his eyes upon her with a degree of sternness amounting almost to ferocity.

"What master or mistress taught you, young woman," said he, "to ask a gentleman coming into your house to take a glass of ale, before it is ascertained that he drinks

such a thing as malt liquor of any kind? Learn your business better, miss, and go and bring me some hot water, and half a quartern of rum in it."

Scarcely had the girl departed before Colin entered the room. Jerry looked at him during a space of some moments, and then turned to the fire, or rather fire-place, without uttering a word.

"It is almost more than might have been expected," observed Colin, taking a chair, and speaking in an assumed tone of careless surprise, "that I should have the good fortune to meet with you so early again this morning. But I am thankful indeed to find you alive and unharmed, after expecting nothing less than that you must have met your death in a dozen different dangers."

"*You* thankful!" exclaimed Jerry. "Nay, nay, now!—What! hypocritical, like all the rest of the world? You care nothing for me, so don't pretend it,—no, nor for your mother

either. Though a poor old man, sir, I am proud to be honest; and from this day forwards shall disown *you*, and would, though you were made the greatest man in England. You are too great a coward, sir."

"To be induced to lift my hand against the life of a man who has befriended me, and is my own father, too, most certainly I am," replied Colin.

"What — bribery! bribery?" exclaimed Jerry; "purchased with fine clothes, I see! Well, well, you are your father's son, not mine. I say, you are too much of the worm."

"To injure my father, I am."

"Or to revenge your mother's wrongs."

"No, sir; I deny it. But I will not do it as you wish."

"And any other way it is impossible."

"I hope not," replied Colin. "An injury may be great; but there is such a thing as restitution. Mr. Lupton is very kind to *me*."

"To you? But what is that to your

mother, or to me, her father? Ay, ay, I see, young man, it is all self, self! *Mr. Lupton is very kind to me*—true—*to me*, and that is enough."

"No, it is not enough," answered our hero. "A great deal more must be done, and may be done, if, to begin with, I can but make you and Mr. Lupton friends."

"FRIENDS!" exclaimed Jerry — "FRIENDS! Utter that word again, sir—"

"I do; I repeat it," he continued; "and I am not such a coward as to fear that you will attempt to harm me, because I say that, both for my mother's sake and your own, for Mr. Lupton's and mine, you must be friends. Remember, if you have something to forgive him, he has a great deal to forgive you also."

"He something to forgive *me!* What is it? I suppose for having spared him so long. But if I spare him much longer, may I never be forgiven where I shall better want it!"

"It is but an hour or two ago," replied Colin, "that I prevailed on him not to raise the hue and cry after you until things could be better explained, although you have twice attempted his life."

"Is that it? Is that his forgiveness? Then I hurl it back in his face, and in yours, and tell him I want none of it! If he wants to take me let him, and I will sit here till he comes. Fetch him, and let him try; and then, if the third time does not do for all, I shall well deserve a gallows for being such a bungler at my business."

"He has no desire to injure you at all," said Colin.

"How very kind of him!" retorted Jerry, "seeing how good he has been to my only daughter, and how badly I have rewarded him for it!"

"But you must know how much the law puts in his power."

"I care neither for the law nor his power. My law is my own, and that I shall abide by."

Not to prolong this dialogue, of which sufficient has been given to show the character of the speakers, I shall merely observe, that Jerry Clink concluded it by emphatically declaring, that never to the end of his life should he, on any consideration whatever, give up this the great object for which he lived, unless he was so far fortunate as to achieve it at an earlier period; and this asseveration he ratified by all such infernal powers as could conveniently be summed up into one long oath-like sentence, — a sentence which it is not necessary here to repeat.

Finding all his efforts to overcome, or even to mollify, the desperate determination of vengeance, which Jerry still so violently entertained, altogether vain, Colin could not at the moment form in his own mind any other conclusion than that which pointed out the

propriety of securing Jerry, in order to insure Mr. Lupton's personal safety. This, however, from the inevitable consequences which must follow, was a step on the brink of which he hesitated, and from which he turned with horror. Was there no way by which to avoid the dreadful necessity of involving his own mother's parent in the pains of a fearful criminal law? — to her lasting shame and grief, and his own as lasting sorrow and regret. How devoutly in his heart did he wish that he could be a peace-maker, an allayer of bad passions, a reconciler of those whose own evils had brought them into this depth of trouble! Then, indeed, all might be well; or at least so far well, as any ending may be which comes of so sad a beginning; for he felt that, after the painful disclosures which had that morning been made to him, the brightest light of his future life was dimmed, and the most he could hope for was to go through existence under those subdued feelings of enjoyment which ever

result from the consciousness of evils past, and for ever irremediable.

Still he clung to the hope that the old man's violence might be mitigated, as he became more familiar with the thoughts of reconciliation, of atonement being made to his daughter, and as the kindness of Mr. Lupton to himself should be rendered more evident.

The agitation and excitement of his mind, consequent on these and similar reflections, caused him for the time almost to forget the object he had in view with respect to the imprisoned James Woodruff. Before, however, their present interview terminated, Colin again alluded to the subject, and requested at least to be informed by what singular chance of fortune it could have happened that the unfortunate gentleman alluded to could possibly have been confided to the keeping of Jerry Clink.

"Why, as to that," replied Jerry, "I've no particular objection to tell you, and then you'll believe me; but mind, I shall go no farther.

Don't inquire whether he is likely to be dead or alive next week,—where he is, or anything else about him. I clap that injunction on you beforehand. As to the other part of the business, it happened this way. If you 've any memory, you'll remember that night I jumped out o' the window at Kiddal Hall, when, but for *your* meddling, I should have brought down my game without twice loading. Well, I got into the woods safe enough; but, knowing the place would be a deal too hot to hold me for a while, I next day went clandestinely off into a different part of the country, in order to make safe. I partly changed my dress and name, and at last pitched my tent under a rock in a solitary part of Sherwood Forest, where I never saw a man, and no man saw me for weeks together. However, as I gathered ling for making besoms, and carried them about the surrounding country, I got to be pretty well known; and, amongst the rest, I fell in with a Mr. Rowel, who lived on the edge of

the waste, and who behaved very well to me. Well, one day he came down to my rock-hole, and told me he wanted me to take a madman under my keeping, who had been brought to his house by his brother, and whom they wanted, for very particular reasons, to get out of the way. 'Well, well,' said I to him, 'bring him down: I care for neither a madman nor the devil, and can manage either when occasion calls.' They accordingly brought him, tied hand and foot and blindfolded, pitched him into my place, and there I have had him ever since, and been well paid for my trouble, or else I should not have been here. However, when the man himself told me his story, I found he was not more mad, perhaps, than those that sent him; and so, as your mother had told me all about your part of the affair besides,—for *she* knew where I was gone to,—I thought it a fair chance for making you do as a son ought to do, and revenging her dishonour, when, perhaps, it did not lie so con-

veniently in my power. But I am deceived in you altogether; and sooner than I'll ask anybody else again to do my business, may I be sunk to the lowest pit of perdition! No, may I—"

"Say no more," observed Colin, interrupting him, "but just answer me this—"

"Mind," said Jerry, "I clapped an injunction on you."

"Very well," remarked Colin; "I'll ask no questions."

But he reflected within himself that the place of Jerry's abode would now be no difficult thing to discover, and that, with a convenient force and quiet management, it might readily be surprised, and Woodruff's liberation be effected.

One thing more only did he now wish to be made acquainted with, for on that depended the course he should at the present moment adopt with respect to old Jerry himself. He wished to ascertain whether it was the old man's intention to remain and lurk about the

town, seeking opportunities for gratifying his revenge, or to return at once to the place whence he had come.

"I shall not stay here," replied Jerry, "for I can trust none of you; but some time, when least it is expected, Mr. Lupton will find me by his side."

Trusting to put Mr. Lupton effectually on his guard against immediate danger, and hoping by his future proceedings ultimately to avert that danger altogether, without any appeal to legal protection or to violence, Colin concluded not to molest the old man at present.

Thus, then, he parted with Jerry, forming in his own mind, as he returned townwards, a very ingenious scheme for countermining all the plans of which Rowel and his brother had made Jerry Clink the instrument and depositary.

CHAPTER II.

In which Mr. Lupton explains to Colin the story of himself and his lady.

When next Colin Clink met his father the Squire, it was under the influence of such feelings of embarrassment as scarcely left him at liberty to speak; while Mr. Lupton, on his part, received him with that quiet melancholy, though unembarrassed air, which marked emphatically a man upon whom the force of unhappy and unusual circumstances has produced a subdued, though lasting, sense of dejection.

"For some time past," said he, taking Colin's hand, and conducting him to a chair,—"for some time past, my boy, I have felt that one day or other it must come to this. Ever

since the time when Providence so singularly threw it in your power to save me from a violent end,—and from *such* a hand too!—I have been a changed man. By that event Heaven seemed to lay, as it were, a palpable finger upon my soul, the dint of which is everlasting. That from such retributive justice, if justice it could be called, I should have been so saved by one whose very existence itself had called that justice into action, appears to me like a marvellous lesson, in which Providence intended at once to admonish me of my criminality, and at the same time to remind me of its mercy."

Mr. Lupton here covered his eyes with his hand. In a few minutes he thus continued,—

"From that moment I foresaw that, sooner or later, you must know all. *Now* you do know all; and that knowledge has come to you in such a shape, as to render any farther allusion to it needless. The subject is at best a painful one to us both, but most especially

so to me; although I once held such things lightly, and as matter for pleasantry and joke. I now acknowledge you as my son; and I confess that a proud, though painful, time it is, now I can do so face to face. Save in yours and my own, the blood of an ancient and honourable family runs in no human veins. You are grown to manhood, and the circumstances which Providence has brought about enable me to address you thus without impropriety. But you must be told, my boy, that I was the last, the very last of all my race. My father knew it; he lamented over it; but he cherished and guarded me because of it, as though the world contained for him no other treasure. *I* knew it too; I grew up, as I may say, side by side with that fatal knowledge. With our ideas of long descents, and ancient honourable lines, it is the bitterest thought in a man's breast to think that here the stream must stop; that in this one body it is lost, and the sun shall shine upon its name

no longer. Anxiety for my life and welfare helped to bring my father to the grave earlier than otherwise nature would have called him, and he died while yet I was very young. But before he died he bound me, on attaining my twenty-first year, to marry one of the members of an opulent and numerous family, which had long enjoyed his esteem. I did so, and the lady he had selected became my wife. There were circumstances between Mrs. Lupton and myself which need not be explained, but which, while they made her deem herself most unhappy in her fate, left me not a whit less so in opinion of mine. It is sufficient that I say, years passed on, and I was still THE LAST. Beyond this I need not go. In you, my boy, in you — but no, that need not to be said, either. Only this I will and must say, that, under circumstances which the world superficially may deem highly criminal, there may be hidden causes, and feelings, and springs of action, which no heart knows but his that con-

tains them, and which, through the force of perhaps erroneous notions and education from our youth, have become individually equally strong with right principles, and may therefore possibly be in some sort received in palliation."

Colin was very materially concerned during, and affected at the conclusion of, the above speech; although the author himself of this faithful history cannot refrain from expressing his opinion, that its tenor and tendency seem somewhat inconsistent with Mr. Lupton's apparent neglect of Colin during the early part of his life, and savours more of a plausible attempt to excuse himself, than of a plain exposition of real motives. Possibly, however, by suspending judgment a while, both himself and the reader may on this point become a little wiser before this history be brought to a termination.

For the present, we may continue this scene a few moments longer.

"With regard to Mrs. Lupton," continued the Squire, "as I intend shortly to introduce you to her, it may be as well to inform you beforehand, that the satisfaction your presence in my house will give must not be judged from *her* reception of you. What it may be I cannot foresee. I cannot even judge what steps a woman in her situation may think proper to take; but whatever they be, it is needful you should see her, and be introduced to her as *the heir of Kiddal*, before she dies. Had she acceded to my wishes years ago, — had we, as I desired, been divorced before you were born, this present necessity and trouble would never have come upon us; but that proceeding she resisted to the last. And though there are circumstances pointed out by the laws which might place the power of adopting such an alternative wholly in my own hands; yet, rather than so deeply wound the feelings and destroy the future peace of a woman who loved me, and whom I had loved, I have

rather chosen to endure, to pass years of unavailing regret, and come to this, even this, at last. I have neglected her, it is true, partly in hopes of thereby inducing her to give way, and partly because I had no heart to be a hypocrite. I never could very well affect what I did not feel.

Mr. Lupton subsequently informed Colin, that although the lady of whom he had been speaking had, during some years past, lived apart from him, sometimes residing in town, and occasionally abroad, yet that very recently she had expressed her desire and intention to return to the old hall once more, and to pass the following winter there. On that occasion it was purposed by him that Colin should meet her.

I should be doing a great injustice to Colin were I to disguise from the reader the satisfaction which, notwithstanding all drawbacks, he could not fail to feel from the, to him, magnificent prospects that Mr.

Lupton's discourse opened before him. To think that, from a poor and helpless farmer's boy, he should thus suddenly and unexpectedly have risen, as it were, to the rank of a squire's son, with the certainty of a great fortune to be bestowed upon him, and such a fine old house as Kiddal Hall in which to enjoy it, and to pass the remainder of his days! What a triumph, too, did it not give him over all the paltry and tyrannical souls who about his native place had made his life miserable, and even done as much as lay in their power to hunt him out of existence.

These feelings were far less the result of vindictiveness than of that just sense of retribution which may be said to exist in every honest breast.

These matters being thus disposed of, Colin seized his opportunity to re-introduce the question regarding old Jerry Clink.

"With respect to him," replied Mr. Lupton, "though I am astonished to find he is still

alive, instead of hearing, as I had anticipated, that his body had been picked up off Limehouse, I am too sensible of his feelings, and the cause of them, to entertain against him any ideas of retaliation. My own security is all I must provide for, — that I am bound to do; and, so long as that can be insured, I shall take no farther notice of the past. We have both been wrong already, and had better on both sides avoid wronging each other any farther."

Colin expressed his hopes that, bad as matters now appeared to stand, everything might yet be accommodated in a manner which would leave all parties the happier for their forgiveness, and the wiser from the troubles they had undergone.

"It is hopeless," answered Mr. Lupton. "The man whose sense of injury, and determination to have revenge, can so vividly outlive the wear of so many years, is not, I am afraid, of a sufficiently ductile metal to be ever formed

into a kinder shape. Unless some altogether unforeseen circumstance should happily come between to reverse the present tendency of events, it is to me a distinct and evident truth, that either that old man or I will eventually prove the death of the other."

This opinion he uttered in such a serious and almost prophetical tone, as left upon the mind of his hearer an impression which all his own most sanguine hopes and predictions were insufficient to eradicate.

CHAPTER III.

Wherein Peter Veriquear makes love to Miss Sowersoft, and becomes involved in trouble. — Mr. Palethorpe's reconciliation with his mistress.

In pursuance of a design which Colin had secretly formed, involving a journey to Sherwood forest, and the surprise of Jerry Clink's retreat, for the carrying off of James Woodruff, he one afternoon might have been seen wending his way towards his old quarters in Bethnal Green. The co-operation of some one, a perfect stranger to Jerry, and in whose sense and integrity entire confidence could be placed, was imperatively required in its successful execution; and, in lack of a better

man for the business, Colin selected his old employer, Mr. Peter Veriquear, provided that gentleman's known indifference towards other people's business could by any possibility be overcome.

On arriving at his domicile, Colin found that Peter was from home, having taken advantage of a fine day to convey his small family in the cradle-coach to a favourite suburban retreat, for the enjoyment of tea and toping, not far from the tower at Canonbury.

In this, and innumerable similar places about the environs of the metropolis, it is that, on fine warm summer afternoons and evenings, especially on Sundays, the shop-tired and *counter-sunk* inhabitants of the respectable working classes assemble, ostensibly for the purpose of imbibing what by common courtesy is dignified with the title of fresh air, though in reality with equally as settled an intention of mixing the said fresh air with bottled

stout, three X ales, and a pipe or two of bird's-eye. Here you may see the young lover anxiously endeavouring to "insinivate" himself into the good graces of his sweetheart, by evincing the most striking solicitude that she should soak up repeated bird-sips of his cold "blue-ruin." You may observe them—true lovers of twilight—getting into the veriest back corner of arbour or bower, telling in security the almost silent tale, that no ear may hear but theirs. Here, also, is seen the young husband, with his wife following behind him, a "pledge" of affection toddling by his side, and perhaps a "duplicate" hugged preciously up in his arms; while the empty-headed spark, who lives in seeing and being seen, the gross and sensual guzzler of heavy wet, and the old quiet smoker, whom nothing can move or elevate, make up this motley assembly. Pots and glasses appear on every side, and busy waiters running in all directions across the grass, with tray, or

lantern, or glowing piece of live touchwood, to light the pipes of the company.

As our hero entered the tavern and tea-gardens in question, he passed beneath a low and long colonnade of a somewhat humble description, the top of which was formed by the projection of the second story of the building. Several miniature conveyances for the small aristocracy of the baby generation stood about, and amongst them that identical one on which Colin had himself once exercised his abilities, as previously described.

To the left hand lay a wide lawn, on which some score or two of youngsters were disporting themselves in the twilight, while the "parents and guardians," as the newspapers say, of these small gentry were lolling at their ease in certain cots, or arbours, made waterproof with pitch, which bounded the sides of the green.

In one of these Colin soon found the individual of whom he was in search. Having

communicated to Peter some general idea that his assistance was required in a very important enterprise,

"True," replied Veriquear, "it may be of great consequence to you; but that, you know, is your own affair. It is no business of mine."

"But you will be well rewarded by Mr. Woodruff afterwards, I doubt not," replied Colin.

"Do you think so? Oh, then, in that case, it begins to look more like my own affair than I thought it was. Yes, yes; good pay, you know, always makes a thing a man's business directly."

And hereupon the matter was discussed at leisure, and in a manner which clearly proved that, upon sufficient reason given, Peter could take quite as much interest in other people's business as ever he had taken in his own.

While Colin thus sat in discourse with his old employer, his attention had several times

been partially attracted by a voice in the next adjoining arbour, but which now elevated itself to a distinctly audible pitch in the expression of the following sentiment:—

"Upon my word, those little dears are delightful to look on! The satisfaction of having children to bring up—ay, dear!—the pleasure and delight, Mr. Palethorpe, of leading them as it were by the nose, symbolically speaking:—oh! the delight of it must be—must be—I hardly know what to call it—but something which, in an unmarried state, the imagination can scarcely attempt to soar up to. And then their tiny voices—some ill-tempered people may call it squealing if they please—but to a father's ears, I should think, it must be welcome night and day,—that is, if he has the common feelings of a father about him. It is really astonishing how happy some people might be, if they did but take something of a determination at some time or other of their lives to adopt

some course with respect to somebody or other, which might — what shall I say? — might—might—however, I mean, which might lead to something final and decisive."

"Sartinly, meesis," replied the individual thus addressed, "I don't dispoot all that; only, when a man has a good appetite hisself, and can eat most of what 's put before him, it seems natteral enough that his children would go and do the same; and that would take a little more mainteaning than some of us can exactly afford. I can't see myself how *we* could go all that length, with a proper eye to our own old age."

"Ah!" replied the lady, "there it is! I really think there is not a grain of filial feeling left in any farmer in Yorkshire."

"I 'm sure, meesis," rejoined Palethorpe, "you 'll not accuse me of wanting in filly-al feeling, when you know there isn't a single filly nor colt neither on the whole farm as I haven't showed the —"

"I don't mean that!" exclaimed the lady; "you don't understand me. But I can only say it for myself, that it would be no great trouble to me, not a bit of it, to sink the whole of myself in the endeavour to raise a prodigy of children, that should prove a complete honour to any farm-yard in the riding. The pretty dears! how I should spoil them out of kindness!—yes, that I should—I know I should. Ugh! I could squeeze their little hearts to pieces, I could!"

This rhapsody left Colin no longer in the dark. Mr. Palethorpe was again in London, accompanied by the loving and amiable Miss Sowersoft.

A capital idea at this moment struck Colin's mind. Mr. Peter Veriquear was already well acquainted with the story of Palethorpe's previous visit to town, and had applauded Colin for the part he had then taken in punishing that poor booby as he deserved. He therefore now only required to be informed

that both Palethorpe and his mistress were in the next box, in order, as Colin hoped, to be induced to join him in an innocent trick upon the worthy couple. His proposition was simply this,—that Peter should quietly walk into their arbour, sit down next to Miss Sowersoft, call for drink, as though he had just arrived, and then proceed, according to the best of his ability, in making love to that lady, no less to her own eventual disappointment, than to the annoyance and mortification of the redoubtable Samuel. Veriquear laughed at the notion, but objected that to make love to a lady in that manner could not possibly be any business of his, seeing, in the first place, that he had no desire; in the second, that he was married; and in the third, that possibly he might after all come off the worst for it.

"Besides," he added, "what will Mrs. Veriquear say if she should happen to catch me, for I expect her up to tea here very soon;

and if she *should* come before the joke is completed, I am afraid she would turn it into a regular Whitechapel tragedy."

"Oh, never heed that!" replied Colin. "I 'll be bound to see you safe, and all right. Go in directly, and do it before the chance be lost. Here, waiter!" and he whispered to him to carry a bottle of stout into the next box for his friend, without delay.

In a few minutes more Peter Veriquear was sitting beside Miss Sowersoft, while Colin peeped through a nick in the boards which divided the two boxes, and with high glee observed all that passed.

"A fine evening this, ma'am," said Peter.

"Delightful evening, indeed, sir!" echoed Miss Sowersoft.

"Yees, it 's pleasant," added Palethorpe, who remembered his former exploits, and began to fear a thief; at the same time that he thought it the most advisable course at present to speak civilly to him.

"Admirable places these," continued Peter, "for the enjoyment of the working-people, who are confined in shops and warehouses from week's end to week's end."

"They are, indeed," said Miss Sowersoft.

"I should think so," added Palethorpe.

"And, really," continued the lady, "I had not the most remote conception that such places existed. It is positively like a private gentleman's private grounds."

"Uncommon like," repeated Palethorpe.

"Then you are strangers here, ma'am?" asked Peter.

"Quite so, sir!" answered the lady. "We have only been up a few days."

"*I* ar'n't a stranger, though," protested Palethorpe; "I 've bin afore, and know what 's what as well as most folks. He 'd be a sharper chap than somebody that I see to drop on us."

Miss Sowersoft here gave Palethorpe a nudge with her foot, and squeezed her brows and mouth up at him into a very severe expression

of reprehension. At the same time Colin poked a sharp toothpick between the boards against which his back leaned, and inserted it about the tenth of an inch deep into Palethorpe. The varlet jumped, as, thinking he had hitched upon a nail; and, having looked under him without finding anything, sat down again a little farther off. In the mean time Peter looked very graciously at the lady, who seemed by no means displeased with his attentions, and continued a conversation, in which he prognosticated how many marvellous sights she would see in London, and how much she would be delighted before her return: concluding with an obscure hint that it would give him much pleasure, should he at any time chance to meet with her again, to point out the objects best worthy a stranger's attention. Miss Sowersoft smirked benignantly, and glanced at Palethorpe with an expression which seemed to say that "somebody might now see that everybody did not think so little

of somebody else, as some people were apt to imagine;" while Palethorpe himself grew paler, and verily began to think that his "meesis" was going to be taken, without farther ceremony, altogether out of his hands. He fidgeted about on his seat, as though bent on polishing his breeches, like a table-top; while another poke of the toothpick, twice as deep as before, made him fairly cry out, and curse the joiner who had put up the benches without knocking his nails down.

Encouraged by his success, Peter so far increased his attentions as at length fairly to arouse the jealousy of Mr. Palethorpe, who resented the insult thus put upon him by declaring that as that lady was keeping company with himself, nobody else should speak to her so long as he was by, or else his name was not Palethorpe. To which valiant speech Miss Sowersoft herself replied by informing her farming-man that he was one of those kind of people who seemed as if they could

Mr. Patethorpe's jealousy aroused

neither make up their own minds to come to a decisive point themselves, nor endure to see anybody else do the same. A sentiment which Mr. Veriquear rendered still more strikingly illustrative by declaring that the gentleman who sat opposite him was like one of those ill-tempered curs, that turn up their own noses at a bone, but grumble and snarl at every other dog that attempts to touch it.

Finding even his own "meesis" against him, Palethorpe's mettle began to rise, and he demanded to know whether Mr. Veriquear meant to call him a cur? To which Veriquear replied, that he would look still more like one if he went upon all-fours. Hereupon Mr. Palethorpe challenged his antagonist to a boxing-match upon the green, swearing that he would lick him as clean as ever any man was licked in this world, or be d—d for his trouble. Peter ridiculed this threat, and begged the courageous gentleman who made it to recollect that he was not now in Yorkshire; informing

him still further that if he did not take particular care, he would lay himself under the unpleasant necessity of making another appearance at the police-office, as he had done upon a former occasion. Mr. Palethorpe turned pale on hearing this; while Miss Sowersoft seemed literally astounded, as she demanded in a shrill and faint, but earnest voice, whether he (Mr. Veriquear) *knew* Mr. Palethorpe and his calamity."

"Everybody in London knows him," replied Veriquear; "and I can assure you, ma'am, that it is no credit to any respectable female to be seen with a man who has rendered himself so disgracefully notorious."

Afraid that she had committed herself in the eyes of all the people of the metropolis, Miss Sowersoft looked upon the unlucky Palethorpe at the moment almost with horror; at the same time unconsciously and instinctively she clung for support to the strange hand of that poor man's supposed rival. At this in-

teresting and peculiarly striking part of the scene, Mrs. Peter Veriquear (directed by Master William, whom she had picked up on the lawn) bounced suddenly into the box.

Colin, whose business it was to have prevented this surprise by keeping a good look-out for the arrival of the last-named lady, had been so deeply engaged in spying through a little round hole, which he had made by pushing a knot out of one of the boards, and had found himself so mightily entertained with the scene before him, that the sudden apparition-like appearance of Mrs. Veriquear almost confounded him; and especially when, in the next moment, he beheld that lady, who instantly detected her husband's situation, dart like a fury at Miss Sowersoft, whom she concluded had seduced him, and pommel away with her fists as might some belated baker, who has the largest amount of dough to knead up within the least possible given space of time. Palethorpe and Veriquear were instantly up in

arms — the latter endeavouring to restrain his wife, and the former, with a degree of chivalrous feeling entirely peculiar to himself, striking her with brutal force upon the head and face; while Master William Veriquear, seeing the imminent danger of his worthy parents, struck up a solo in the highest possible key, upon the natural pipes with which he was provided for such occasions.

No sooner did Colin perceive the dastardly conduct of Palethorpe, than he forsook his situation at the peep-hole, and hurrying to the spot, laid his old foe, the farming-man, flat upon the floor with a well-directed blow of the fist. The latter looked up from his inglorious situation; and if ever man felt convinced that he was haunted by an evil genius, Mr. Palethorpe felt so on this occasion, and that *his* evil genius was embodied in the form of Colin Clink.

A regular mêlée now ensued, during which Mrs. Veriquear's cap was sent flying into the

air, like a boy's balloon. The back of the arbour was driven out, and Mr. Veriquear, locked in the arms of Miss Sowersoft, fell through the opening into that beautiful and refreshing piece of water which has its local habitation opposite the west side of Canonbury Tower.

The sudden appearance of several policemen amongst the combatants put an end to the sport. Colin and Palethorpe were seized, and attempted to be hurried off; but as neither had any very particular reason for desiring a situation in the watch-house, followed by an appearance before the magistrates, they contrived so far to accommodate matters with the guardians of the public peace as to be allowed to go at liberty, and each his several way.

Colin's first step was to see to the safety of his friend, Veriquear. He and Miss Sowersoft had already been fished out of the pond without rod, line, or net, by the surrounding spectators, and now stood upon the bank, like

a triton and a mermaid just emerged from their palaces under the flood. The latter-named of the two was conveyed into the tavern, and put to bed, while the former was induced, at the representations of Colin, to walk rapidly home with the enraged Mrs. Veriquear on his arm. Colin himself undertaking the charge of the young Veriquears, and drawing them down in the basket-coach at some short distance behind.

Peter Veriquear naturally enough employed the whole time occupied in their journey home by explaining to his spouse the origin, decline, and fall, of the history of this adventure. A statement which Colin afterwards so far corroborated as to leave Mrs. Veriquear entirely convinced, not only of her husband's innocence of any criminal intention, but satisfied that a capital practical joke had been played upon two individuals most richly deserving of it.

As to the unexpected appearance of the worthy couple in town within so comparatively

short a time of Mr. Palethorpe's former inglorious expedition, it is to be accounted for upon the same principle as are many other matters of equal importance: that is, according to a certain principle of curiosity, which is supposed to exist pretty largely in every human breast, but especially in the bosoms of the fair. And although, strictly speaking, Miss Sowersoft could not be termed one of the fair either in her complexion or her dealings, yet she so far came under that category touching the article of curiosity, that I much doubt whether Dame Nature ever was blessed with another daughter in whom this virtue shone more conspicuously.

During the first day or two after her discovery of Palethorpe's frail and erring nature, she betook herself, as far as the duties of the farm would allow, to the silence and solitude of her own bed-chamber; where, in all human probability, she wept over the depravity of human nature, and scattered the flowers of a

gloomy imagination about the corpse of all her blighted hopes. Several times was she seen with a white handkerchief applied to her eyes. For some weeks Mr. Palethorpe lived as though he lived not. To her, at least, he was dead: she saw him not, heard him not, knew him not. When he spoke his voice passed her by like the wind: when he whistled she heeded it no more than the whistling of a keyhole; when he laughed, — if ever he ventured to laugh, — she heard no mirth in the sound: when he cried, — if ever he did cry, which I very much doubt, — she participated not in his sorrows: and when, as very often happened, he sat still, and did nothing at all, then — then only, did he come up to her ideas of him, and appear (if such a thing can be conceived by the ingenious reader) an embodied nonentity. Meantime Palethorpe ate and drank at random, and unheeded. A feeling of desperation seemed to govern all his herbivorous and carnivorous propensities. While Miss

Sowersoft pined, Palethorpe evidently grew fatter; while she stalked like a ghost, he grew redder and more robust. The contrast, at length, became unendurable; and from mere envy and spite she at last began to speak to him again.

From a sullen and sulky exchange of words, this happy pair at length proceeded to a certain reluctant but animated discourse, in which explanation, reproaches, and deprecation, were abundantly resorted to. She accused; he apologized and regretted, and then, at length, she forgave; and Mr. Palethorpe once more had the satisfaction of finding himself restored to tolerable favour.

I have said that Miss Sowersoft's curiosity was extreme. When Palethorpe detailed to her all the wonders of his expedition, her propensity could not be restrained. She, too, must see London. Besides, to tell the truth, her reconcilement sat but awkwardly upon even her own shoulders at first; and, like an

ill-fitted saddle on a steed, only galled the creature it was intended to relieve. She secretly thought a journey abroad in Palethorpe's company could not fail mightily to facilitate her plan of achieving his final conquest, for, in spite of all errors, she felt that his name must some day become her own, or she should die. Accordingly, the pleasure-tour to town was at last agreed upon, and hence their appearance again at the time and place in question.

Returning to Colin, it may now be stated, that before he took his departure from Mr. Veriquear's that evening, a plan was arranged between himself and Peter for carrying his first and most important design into immediate execution.

CHAPTER IV.

Introduces certain new characters upon the stage, and amongst them the real heroine of this history. Besides containing a love-story far superior to the last.

But while the delightful loves of Miss Sowersoft and Mr. Palethorpe yet leave their tender impress on the mind, and predispose the susceptible soul of my romantic reader for the reception of tales of gallantry and devoted affection, let me take advantage of the favourable opportunity thus afforded by the condition of his heart, to make mention of another delicate matter which, up to this time, has been making some progress in reality,

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although not the remotest allusion hitherto has been made to it.

Notwithstanding the little real or supposed amours in which Colin has previously been engaged, and the last of which so nearly, in his own opinion, made shipwreck of his heart, it must have been evident that the opportunity which promised the most proper and appropriate match for him had not yet arrived. Towards Fanny, it is true, he had never in this sense entertained any feelings of love, nor had he ever professed any. On Fanny herself lay all the pain and bitterness of having secretly nourished an affection for one who was insensible of it, and on whom, as it now pretty clearly appeared, her heart had been set in vain. While, with respect to Miss Wintlebury, not only had she herself declined his company, and withdrawn from his knowledge, but the advice of his father, Mr. Lupton, combined most strongly with other circumstances to persuade him that even had

it not been thus, he would but be paying due deference to his protector in considering more seriously upon the subject before he ventured to carry his communications with that young woman any farther. The reflections moreover that arose in his mind touching the very altered circumstances in which he was placed by Mr. Lupton, as well as the prospects which now through that gentleman opened upon his future life, could scarcely fail very materially to influence even him in his decisions upon this important point. But Miss Wintlebury being voluntarily withdrawn from him, and Fanny being made aware that he loved her only as a friend, and reconciled he hoped, too, to that knowledge,—what considerations of any importance remained to prevent his forming some such other alliance as might at once prove suitable to his expected future fortunes and rank as a country gentleman, as well as agreeable to the wishes and advice of him by whom those fortunes and rank were to be

conferred, and whom, on other accounts, he was bound to endeavour to please?

While in this state of mental uncertainty, Mr. Lupton had taken an opportunity of introducing him to the acquaintance of one Mr. Henry Calvert, a gentleman of comfortable, though not large, fortune, residing in one of the northern suburbs of London, and in whose family he soon found, — as his father had secretly desired, — a companion very much after the heart of any young man of true sense and sensibility. This was in the person of Jane Calvert, the youngest of two sisters, and a lady within a year or two of his own age. Well-educated, sensible, and good-tempered, she was one of those creatures who, as they grow up to womanhood, and all its nameless witcheries, become unconsciously, as it were, the life and light of the household; — to whom parents, brothers, and sisters,— all instinctively and unknown, perhaps, to themselves,— look

up as the soul of the family; — whom all love — none envy; whose presence, in a manner, makes glad, none know why; as the spring delights us unthought on, or the flowers by our way-side inspire pleasure and gratification even when least we know whence our elasticity of spirit is derived. She was one of those happy beings — the heart, as it were, of the domestic circle — that would be most missed if taken away; that would leave the longest empty place in the bosoms of those who had surrounded her; but who, in many things, was least felt while present, save in the quiet and gentle sense of unobtrusive happiness which her presence ever occasioned. Such was the character of the young lady with whom it may now be said Colin was indeed in love. Below him in height, she yet was sufficiently tall to give dignity to an elegant figure; while a light and brilliant complexion, associated, as it usually is, with hair and eyes of a hue which the pencil of nature

colours in admirable correspondence, but which in words can scarcely be properly described, gave no fairer a representation exteriorly than the jewel of a soul within most amply deserved.

On the other hand, Jane, who had seen Colin at her father's house but on few occasions before, now, for the first time in her existence, became conscious that, happy as she was, she might be yet happier in a sphere of which hitherto she had thought nothing, and under circumstances which, even when alone, she scarcely suffered herself to contemplate. Up to this time she had never dreamed of love beyond the circle of her own family: now she felt that loveable and good creatures exist beyond in the wide world, whom to see is to remember, and to remember is to regret their absence. She found that the heart is capable of other love than that of parents, sisters, and brothers: and not capable only, but that such may become too deeply

necessary to its happiness, ever again — after once making that discovery — to be truly happy without it.

Her father and family lived in that quiet and learned retirement which neither sought nor invited, as they did not require, the excitement of continual company, to enable them to get through life without weariness. A tasteful and elegant, though simple, home afforded to them far higher pleasures than all the genteel riot and conventional affectations of happiness which occupy so much of the time and attention of the great body of that class of society to which they belonged, and in which they might have shone so gracefully conspicuous. But Mr. Calvert the father was too much a man of mind to precipitate either himself or his family into the whirl and eddy of what may be termed fashionable life. At the risk of being thought dull and spiritless,—of having his daughters neglected, and his sons regarded as "very

unlike what one naturally expects young men would be,"—he preferred to all other pleasures that sound moral and mental education of his children,—that social, or domestic, training of them up, and that quiet and pleasing attention to the whole economy of his estate, and of all who were on it, which, whatever its defects in the eyes of the world, never fails to produce the greatest amount of real happiness to the possessors, as well as to render them the most capable of becoming the sources of greatest happiness to others. Hence, his daughters had never been presented a dozen times, if not ostensibly, at least virtually, like bills for acceptance, but to be refused. Neither had his two sons—for two he had—any knowledge of those peculiar vices which, though they might have added to their character as young men of spirit, could not by any means have done them credit on any other account.

Besides their own mutual stores of ever

fresh mental enjoyment, this happy and well-judging little family found abundant recreation in a large and admirable library, which Mr. Calvert had himself selected: as well as amusement in an old-fashioned garden of extensive dimensions which enclosed the house on three sides, and overshadowed the roof with its tall elm trees,—planted there perhaps in the days of Addison; and which threw a quiet secluded air over the whole scene. Mr. Calvert's taste, indeed, was so far that of the time to which I have alluded, that Miss Jenny had been so christened after some favourite in the *Spectator;* while the eldest son Roger had, in like manner, received his cognomen though his father's veneration at once for the genius of Addison and his admiration of the character of Sir Roger de Coverley. When Jane once jerked her pincushion into the pond, he reminded her of some tale of a watch being similarly dealt by, as told in his favourite book; and not unfre-

quently spoke of that particular age of British literature as one in which he should have been most happy if it had been his fortune to live.

With such a man, and in a family with such an attraction in it as the one I have before described, it is not to be wondered at that Colin soon found himself happier than ever he could have believed. His own good looks and love of learning recommended him, while the natural powers of his mind carried him through, where else, perhaps, his previous want of habitual intercourse with similar society might have exposed him to inevitable annoyances.

Happiness, however, and especially in love, seems to have been considered in the economy of human nature,—like the sun-light in the world,—as too bright to endure without intervals of darkness and of shade. Not long had Colin and Jane Calvert been thus acquainted,—they had just learned to speak confidingly, and to breathe to each other those

thoughts which before had only trembled on the lips and been stifled in the utterance,—when Colin was astonished and surprised to find in the behaviour of Mr. Calvert a marked and strong difference from that which hitherto he had pursued towards him. It was not essentially less kind than before, but seemed more marked by regret than by offence; as though the bosom in which it originated felt like that of a friend who secretly knows that he *must* part,—not that he would, or wished to do so. Jane, too, seemed downcast; but her regret spoke in her eyes, not words: in long painful suspenses of thought, as it seemed,—though in reality in deep worlds of thought traced out in the brain until they seemed to have no end. And then sometimes, when her father, or her mother, or brother, or sister, chanced to catch a momentary glance of her countenance,—they would find those pretty eyes wet, as if the little well-spring within *would* come to the top and overflow in spite of

her. Did they ask her what was the matter, she smiled without feeling, and replied,— "Nothing!"

But instantly she would leave the room and go alone to her own chamber; thus telling it *was* something, though a something not to be told. And little do I know of human nature if, when there, those tears, denied innocently by the tongue a moment before, did not fall rapidly as she clasped her hands over a little bible which lay on a white cushion by her bedside, and prayed voicelessly that she, and he she loved, might yet be happy.

These things, it was observed by Colin, first occurred some short time after Mr. Lupton and Mr. Calvert had had an interview of several hours' duration in a private room; and during which, he now felt little doubt, the question of the possible future union of the young people had been seriously discussed.

Still it was not easy for him to imagine the cause of this strange difference; nor could he

for a while arrive at any explanation from either party at all satisfactory on the subject. All that he knew was, that nearly the whole family, with the exception principally of Mr. Roger Calvert, even Jane herself,—and that was worst of all,—conducted themselves towards him in a manner which left little doubt upon his mind that some strong cause or other was in operation; which, in their eyes at least, appeared to render the continuance of his acquaintance with the young lady in question unadvisable, and a course to be decidedly avoided. Still there was no harshness,—no decided neglect, no offensive carriage, from any party. The feeling seemed to be that Jane should decline his acquaintance as gradually and as kindly as possible,—but that declined somehow it must be, and forgotten and given up for ever must be the affection, the deep affection, I may properly say, he had conceived for that excellent young creature. One day, however, as he was rambling amongst the

shrubberies with Roger Calvert, the most blunt and open-hearted friend he had in the family, Colin mentioned the subject to him, and ventured to ask plainly what was the real cause of this coldness towards him.

"Perhaps," replied Roger, "I am not doing exactly right by telling you; though, for my own part, I think you ought to know. But since you have so plainly required me to name the reason, I will do so. Mark, however, beforehand, that I do not agree with my father and mother in their opinion about the matter,—I hold that whatever may be said in the Old Testament, it is not Christian of us—it is not our duty—nor do I see how we can justly do it,—to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children."

Conviction flashed on Colin's mind like a burst of light. His cheeks became pale and then red, while he would have burst into tears had not his pride of heart forbidden him.

"I told you," continued Roger on observing

his emotion, " that I did not know whether it was right or not to tell you; but as you wanted to know, and I am no keeper of secrets, it is no blame of mine. Frankly, I tell you it is all owing to the story of your birth, which your father told to mine some days ago together with all the rest of what he meant to do for you, in order that there might be no misunderstanding afterwards between the families. My father and mother, indeed the whole family, like you uncommonly well; and as for myself, I think you a regularly good-hearted fellow, and should have no objection any day to make the second at your wedding with Jenny; but then their rigid and straitened notions are not mine, although I have on several occasions told them just as plainly as I am talking to you now, that they and I are by no means alike in opinion. I can assure you it is nothing else; for though in fact such a match would be quite equal to anything Jane could ever expect, if not greater, as Mr. Lupton

volunteered to make a will in your favour, as well as to give you a handsome fortune down before the marriage, yet with them, especially with my mother, it is a sort of matter of conscience which they do not seem at present as if they could overcome. It is the source of much grief to them, that I can tell you; and especially as Jane seems to have taken such a liking to you: but then, you see —— However, I can only say this,—and I am her brother, and would not see a hair of her head touched, nor a lash of her eye wet unnecessarily,—no, not for the best man in England! but this I promise you, that if *I* were in your place and in love with any young person that I cared anything particular about, I would make up my mind to have her, and HAVE HER I WOULD, let anybody, either man or woman, say or do whatever they liked! That is my spirit,—though I should not have told you so if I had not cared something about you."

In this strange speech Colin saw at once

the bitter cause of all his fear, combined most oddly with something which yet inspired him with hope. Surely he could not altogether fail, with perseverance, and the assistance (to begin with) of such a spirited auxiliary as Roger Calvert had thus proved himself likely to be.

That same night,—as he was upon the eve of his departure for Sherwood forest, on the doubtful expedition for the liberation of James Woodruff, Colin desired and obtained an interview with the young lady. It was after a very early meal — about eight o'clock in the evening — when they walked out along that portion of the garden which lay immediately in view of the front of Mr. Calvert's house. It was a soft mellow autumnal night,—the air was still and warm; the leaves were scattered abundantly on the paths by some rude by-gone blast, and now lay in drifted heaps along the edges of the grass-plots and under every sheltered corner; while an increasing moon, that gave

just light enough to keep darkness out of the sky and total blackness from the earth, seemed to sail, like a forsaken wreck, amongst the white and billowy clouds that overspread the sky. Jane leaned more fondly, he thought, upon his arm than ever before; and during some minutes they paced to and fro, without either of them venturing to speak to the other those words which at best must have been as it were but the preface to trouble. This silence lay heavy on each heart, and yet each feared to break it. The first word would sound like a parting knell, and neither felt courage to utter it. Still they walked up and down; until at length that meaning and eloquent silence, which was at first painful, became insupportable. Suddenly Colin stopped in his path, laid his hand earnestly upon the arm of his companion, and bent his face earthward, as he said,—

"Young lady, there is no farther occasion for disguise or secrecy on the part of yourself

and your family. I know it all, now. We must part! — that is fixed! — Part once more, and for ever! For myself, – as I know myself, and that whatever evil may be supposed to attach to others, *I*, at least, have not individually deserved this, — it is contrary to my nature to endure unkindness undeserved. I am thought unworthy of you, and am treated as though I were; but I will not in reality render myself so, by acting a mean and cowardly part; by pressing my acquaintance where it is not desired, and persisting in those attentions which even she, to whom they are offered,—even *she*, thinks proper to reject."

"Oh, no, do not say so!" exclaimed his companion. "It is not so, indeed, — it is not, indeed!"

"I speak," replied Colin, "only from what I have seen and experienced. I *have* loved you, — I *do* love you! And, for the rest, you know that as well as I."

"In truth, sir," answered Miss Calvert, "I

know nothing whatever of the cause of all this. A few days ago only, I thought we were *so* happy! And now ——"

A flood of tears here told, in the most pitiful of all languages, the difference between that time and the present.

"You know nothing of it?" demanded Colin.

"Nothing, I assure you," answered his companion.

"Then, why," asked he,—"why do worse than even others did, and shun me without knowing why?"

"Because my father and mother, both," sobbed the lady, "told me that it would be better we should not love each other, and that I must try to forget you!"

"And you will do so?"

"I must try, — I must do so, — for it is my duty."

"But will you, — can you?"

"Oh, if you love me, do not ask me! I

ought not to say it, — perhaps I may. If it must be so, I hope I may; but I feel,—yes, my — my dear Colin, — I feel that what they demand of me is impossible. I can never banish you from my bosom, — never! No, not if they would give me the world!"

If ever the reader of this history have been in love, he or she must be perfectly well aware that a climax of feeling of the kind above described is not arrived at without involving ulterior consequences, which philosophers and grammarians have agreed to designate by the verb *to kiss*. It must therefore be understood, that no sooner had the young lady expressed the sentiments last recorded, than Colin, with becoming alacrity, converted that verb into a substantive or noun, — *i.e.* into "anything which exists, or of which we have any notion,"—by saluting her upon the cheek in very becoming and gentlemanly style. This delicate experiment had never been tried between them before; but, I am happy to be

able to record that it perfectly succeeded. Declarations of eternal attachment were afterwards repeated on both sides, and vows of love made, such as the Lady Diana, who was listening from behind a cloud over their heads, hath seldom heard excelled; but which, as a man of honour, I feel bound never to reveal to the public at large. Be it sufficient for the reader to know, that Colin and Jane eventually tore themselves asunder, with the final understanding that neither would ever love another so long — (as some wonderful poet writes) — as the sun continued to shine, the rivers to flow, or the seasons to revolve. This, to be sure, was promising long enough beforehand, but then, being the usual language of love, as found in the works of eminent authors, I — an humble imitator — am in duty bound to make use of it.

The mental excitement produced by this interview, and the reflections consequent upon it, had the effect of entirely preventing Colin

from taking his accustomed rest on retiring to his chamber. He, therefore, endeavoured to wile away an hour or two in reading; and for that purpose straightway established himself in an old-fashioned arm-chair by the fire-place.

Having nearly sat out his exhausted lamp, Colin retired to an unenticing couch, and passed the greater part of the night in the most anxious reflections.

CHAPTER V.

Relates one of the best adventures in which Colin Clink has yet signalised himself.

The sun was already setting behind the rising grounds which marked the westward extreme of Sherwood forest; long lines of variously-coloured cloud, like far-off promontories jutting into seas of gold and silver, marked the place of his decline, when Jerry Clink, silent and alone, might have been seen sitting on a turfen bench by the doorway of a sort of half hut, half cavern, which lay in a small dell in the heart of the waste, far below those horizontal lines of light that now only tinged the heath-covered tops of the

higher hills, or brought out in ghostly relief the scattered and tempest-worn oaks which stood like skeletons far aloof around. By his side stood an earthen pitcher containing his favourite compound, and out of his mouth ascended in peaceful spires the smoke of the immortal herb; while beside him, piled against the wall, lay a heap of bright purple ling or heath, which he had cut and gathered during the day. The old man looked the very personification of solitary enjoyment; a being whose only communion was with earth and sky; and to whom cloud and mountain were as the face of friends. Solitude had no pain for him; day no unsteady pleasures, nor night any fears. The crow that flew high overhead would caw in the upper skies as it cast an eye downwards, and saw him creeping below. The goatsucker would birr in his face as it crossed his path in the gloom; and the cuckoo in his season would give utterance to his notes from the trees closest upon his habitation. He

never molested them, but seemed, as it were, a part of the wild nature around him. A tame jackdaw, that hopped and chattered about his dwelling, was the only thing whose voice he heard there, save only that of one human being, that sometimes cried in complaint or pain from a deep part of the cavern behind the front room of his hut, and that was the voice of James Woodruff.

As Jerry sat thus, sipping, smoking, or talking occasionally to his saucy jackdaw, which had now perched itself on the point of one of his toes, and was impudently saluting the leg that supported him with repeated dabs of his heavy beak, the figure of a man, half seen amongst the thick heath which covered the ground, appeared at a distance. Sometimes he turned one way, sometimes another, as though winding out a devious path amongst the broken irregularities of the ground; and anon he would stand still, and look around, as though irresolute and doubtful which course

to pursue. Jerry watched a long time, but at length lost sight of him, partly owing to the irregularities of the earth, and partly to the near approach of night. As darkness fell upon the solitary world about him, Jerry retired into his hut; and having lighted a small oil lamp, which shed about as much light around as might have been comprised within the circumference of a tolerably-sized round table, and left all the rest of the place in deep spectral shadow, he sat down, with a huge pair of owl-eyed spectacles on, to the perusal of the only book on the premises. Well nigh had he read himself to sleep, when the, to him, extraordinary phenomenon of a civil rap at the door was heard.

Were some learned gentleman meditating in his study, and at a time when he believed himself perhaps to be the most alone, suddenly to receive a blow beside the head from an unseen hand, he could not have started from his seat with more instantaneous abrupt-

ness than did our old friend, Jerry, on hearing that unusual summons. Throwing the door wide open, in order to obtain a better view of whoever might be outside, he beheld the spare figure of a man standing before him.

"Well! what do you want here?" gruffly demanded Jerry.

"I'm lost in the forest," replied the stranger, "though that, to be sure, is my business, and not yours; but if you could either direct me elsewhere not far off, or give me shelter till daylight——"

"No!" interrupted Jerry, "I shall have nobody here."

And thereupon he was about to shut the door in Mr. Peter Veriquear's face — for he it was —had not that gentleman made it his business to clap his foot against it, and thus prevent Jerry's intention being carried into effect. The latter instantly flew into a towering passion at this interruption, and with a fearful

oath threatened to run his knife through him if he did not give way immediately. Peter replied that he had no intention in the world to affront him, or to force himself into the house of any man who did not think it his duty to admit him; but at the same time he appealed to him as a Christian to give him shelter for that one night. Jerry swore that no man nor woman either should ever cross his threshold — especially at that time of night — unless they strode across his corpse. Saying which, he kicked Mr. Veriquear's shins as savagely as might a vicious horse, and set him dancing an original hornpipe of his own extemporaneous composition, while old Clink slammed to the door, and bolted and barred it immediately.

It seemed then that the stratagem which Colin had formed, and of which Mr. Veriquear was deputed to carry out the first part, had failed. This plan had been, — that Peter should introduce himself to Jerry as a

travelling merchant who had lost himself, and was in want of a night's shelter. That he should contrive to learn as much as possible of the place while in it; and then, during the night, while Jerry was fast asleep, quietly open the door to Colin and Roger Calvert, who had joined him in the enterprise, and who should have been waiting not far off, in readiness to take advantage of the opportunity thus afforded them at once to secure old Jerry from doing any mischief, and then to effect the liberation of James Woodruff without disturbance or unnecessary violence. But as Jerry's brutality and caution had rendered this design ineffective even at its commencement, Peter had no other course to pursue but to wait about in the neighbourhood of the cottage — of the situation of which the parties had pretty well assured themselves previously — until such time as his confederates should come up, and other modes of operation could be devised.

Accordingly he selected as comfortable a spot as the nature of the ground would admit, within sight of the hut, where he crouched down amongst the brushy heath, and waited, as he conceived it his business to do, until at length he heard the bell of some distant village church-clock strike twelve. In the stillness of the night it seemed as though that long drawn out sound might have been heard across an infinite space of country; but it was the more welcome to Peter's ears for being the signal which had been agreed upon for the appearance of his associates, Colin and Roger Calvert. In a short time he discerned indistinctly two figures cautiously approaching over the broken ground, and apparently on the look-out for their preconcerted signal from the cottage-door. Peter rose, and advanced to meet them. It was with some difficulty at first sight of him that he prevented their retreating, as thinking all was not right, and they were discovered; but, having contrived to

make himself known, they instantly approached, and heard from him with disappointment the story of his ineffectual attempt to get admitted to a night's lodging within Jerry's cottage.

Under these circumstances, how to get into the cottage without disturbing the savage inmate was now the question. They had come thus far on a ticklish enterprise, and to remain in the neighbourhood long might excite so much suspicion as would eventually render all their efforts nugatory. It was not, therefore, advisable to delay, even as a matter of common policy; while the daring spirit incident to young men of the age of Colin and his friend induced them to make an attempt, which, under present disadvantages, the more sober mind of Peter Veriquear considered rash in the extreme.

The hut which Jerry inhabited being built up at, and partly within, the mouth of a rock-hole, its roof reached scarcely so high as the

ground behind it, while a chimney of ample width, built principally of wood and clay, rose some twelve inches above it at one end. Having taken as accurate observation as the darkness of the night would permit of the nature of the place, Colin now proposed that all three should descend the chimney,—himself taking the lead, — with as much silence as possible, in order to surprise and bind the old man, his grandfather, while yet asleep and incapable of making any effectual resistance. Having done this, a light was to be procured; and either by promises, threats, or search made on their own parts, the place in which poor Woodruff was imprisoned could then be discovered and broken open. And, although Mr. Veriquear at first objected that it was a sweep's business, not his, to go up and down chimneys, yet he eventually agreed to Colin's proposition, on the condition that he himself should be the last to descend, in order that the chimney might be swept and

his clothes saved for him by those who went before.

Accordingly our hero, as a preliminary caution, crept upon the moss-grown roof, and placing his head over the top of the chimney, listened whether anything below was stirring. The light and fire, according to Peter's statement, had long ago been put out, but the air of the funnel over which he leaned was yet hot, sooty, and sulphureous. It would be a stifling undertaking to get down there; although the shortness of the distance from the top to the fire-place promised but a brief continuance to their struggle through such a black and uncomfortable region. As Colin attentively listened at the mouth of this ventage, he distinctly heard old Jerry snoring in his sleep sufficiently loud to have kept any bedfellow — had he been blessed with one — awake; and at every inspiration growling not unlike some jealous bull-dog when just aroused to the consciousness that his master's property

is about to be invaded. Still he listened, and shortly heard more than that. Could it be? Was it possible? Yes, true enough, he indistinctly heard the voice of

> " A soul that pray'd in agony,
> From midnight chime to morning prime,
> *Miserere Domine!*"

He heard in that awful midnight silence the whisperings of poor Woodruff to his God, for freedom at some time to his spirit, and patience to endure until that freedom came! That sound wrought upon his brain like madness; it nerved him doubly for his enterprise, and urged him on to effect his object this time, or perish in the attempt. Every other consideration, in fact, vanished before the irrepressible determination he now felt, to set poor Fanny's father free, or die.

Having arranged with his companions that they should follow him as speedily as possible, he now prepared himself after the best manner he could, and having taken off his boots to

prevent noise, crept cautiously into the chimney. After considerable trouble, and many pauses and hesitations in order to assure himself that Jerry yet continued in his heavy slumber, Colin landed with his feet one on each side the fire-place; and thence he stealthily and silently crept down upon the floor. The whole place seemed as dark as though he had been absolutely sightless; and every movement of the limbs required to be made with such degree of slowness and care as should render noise next to impossible even in case he should have the ill-luck to meet with any obstacle in his endeavours to gain the open portion of the apartment. Woodruff's voice was now still. Perhaps he had sunk to the silence of despair, or of that last flickering of hope which is closest akin to despair, with the heart-ach for his companion, as had been his condition for years; — unthinking how that heart ached thus for the last night at last, and that Providence

had that moment sent a deliverer, even into whose own ear had entered his last beseeching for Heaven's mercy.

But though Colin heard nothing of Mr. Woodruff, the busy tongue of old Jerry began to utter unintelligible jargon in his sleep; during which some unconnected words about blood and everlasting damnation, muttered against some one who had offended him, turned Colin cold with undefinable horror. Had Jerry been awake, and uttered such knowingly, little in this sense would it have affected him. But asleep, — the senseless body in its time of rest, jabbering thus of horrors,— it seemed scarcely less than as if some evil spirit had been heard to speak through the mouth of a corpse, and had made known the fierce language of another and a darker world.

As he stood thus, listening to the horrible tongue that thus muttered in an unseen corner of the hut, Colin found that his friend, Roger Calvert, had safely descended and reached the

hearthstone. Gradually they groped their way, directed by the nasal music which the old man unconsciously played, close to his bedside, without in the least disturbing him. Their object in this movement being to stand close ready to seize and hold him down the moment everything else was prepared. Scarcely were they so stationed ere a tremendous noise in the chimney, loud enough almost to have wakened the Seven Sleepers, frightened at once them from their propriety, and old Jerry from his pillow. In a clumsy attempt to make his descent, Peter Veriquear had so far lost all foothold that nothing remained to support him but his hands, by which he momentarily hung from the chimney-top. This not being of sufficiently stable material to support so important and weighty a personage, gave way all at once. Peter fell with a formidable noise with his feet plump in the ashes of the extinguished fire-place, which instantly flew up in a cloud that almost choked him

from below, while a very uncomfortable quantity of rubbish fell upon his head from the funnel-top.

Simultaneously, as it were, with the disastrous fall of Mr. Peter Veriquear was the upspringing of Jerry Clink. With the sudden and desperate muscular energy of a giant, with which the circumstance of being so awakened unconsciously supplied him, he leaped upright from his bed several feet; and in all probability would have been the next instant on his feet in the room, had it not fortunately happened that the suddenness of his spring upwards had not allowed him time to call to recollection the presence of a heavy beam, which projected out not far above him. Against this he chanced to strike the top of his head with a degree of violence that sent him back almost insensible before even his lips had power to utter the least cry of complaint. This our adventurers instantly found by the helpless manner in which he

lay on the bed, and immediately they proceeded to take advantage of the circumstance thus opportunely, though so strangely, thrown in their way.

Peter Veriquear still stood upright within the bars of the grate, ready to ascend again in case his disaster had rendered such a step advisable; but as his feet had stirred up the ashes in the grate, Colin was glad to observe a few live coals yet glimmering at the bottom. These he contrived to blow into sufficient heat to light a piece of dry half-burnt stick that lay on the hearth; and in the next moment the room in which they stood was distinctly illuminated throughout. The first step was to light a candle that stood on the table, and the next to see to the state and security of old Jerry. Peter Veriquear now descended from his situation, considerably shaken by his fall, though otherwise unhurt. The only complaint he made being that it was the builder's business to have constructed

the chimney-top more solidly, and then it would never have been any concern of his to have tumbled down it.

On proceeding to the bed Colin found old Jerry lying all of a heap, his white hair covered with blood from a wound on the top, and himself apparently senseless. There was no time to be lost. He therefore left his friend Roger and Mr. Veriquear to assist the old man, at the same time instructing them very carefully to secure him if he should attempt to escape from them; while he himself went in search of the cavern, or whatever else it might be, where Mr. Woodruff was confined. As the best guide to this, he demanded in a loud voice,

"Mr. Woodruff!—where are you?—where are you?"

There was no reply. Again he repeated those words, but in a state of feeling which left him almost unconscious of all he said or did.

"Here—here I am!" at length was answer-

ed in a melancholy tone, from an inner place far back, and apparently beyond a door of very small dimensions, securely fastened into the rock, and bound with heavy iron.

Colin flew to the spot whence the sound proceeded. The door was as fast as the rock it was built in. He madly strove to burst it, but with as little effect as the rain might beat against a precipice of adamant. Almost in a frenzy of excitement he rushed back, and scarcely knowing what he did, searched the cottage for the key. At last he found it under Jerry's pillow.

Colin rapidly hastened again to the door,—he inserted the key,—he turned it. A damp sweat stood upon his brow, and his eyeballs seemed almost to blaze, but their sight was nearly gone. He seized the handle, dashed the door open, and beheld James Woodruff standing with his hands chained together before him.

"You are free!" cried Colin, almost hyste-

rically,—"free!—free!" He could but repeat that word; to him there was then no other in the language—"You are free!"

Poor James looked at him doubtfully,—madly, I might say,—and replied, "Do not play with me, whoever you are. It is cruel to trifle with sorrow like mine."

"You are free!" again cried Colin. "Come forth!—you are free!"

James looked at him as though those deep black eyes, which yet had lost none of their lustre, would pierce to the very centre of his soul, and asked, "Is it — is it TRUE?"

"It is!" exclaimed Colin, "as God is good!"

Poor Woodruff placed his hand upon his forehead, as though those words had annihilated thought, and planted insanity where reason was before. When he removed it again, his eyes were fixed on Colin, as though set there for everlasting. He staggered towards him with desperate energy of spirit, but with the

feebleness of a child in body. He approached him,—stretched out his arms,—strove to speak,—failed,—strove a second time, and a second time he found no words. At last he *shrieked*,—literally shrieked, as might a woman, and fell on his face in a swoon.

It would be unnecessary to tell in detail the immediate circumstances that afterwards took place. These can be quite as well imagined as described. Suffice it simply to state, that Mr. Woodruff was soon raised from the ground, and placed on the bottom of Jerry Clink's bed; that a bottle of the old man's spirit was soon discovered by Roger Calvert in a cupboard, and brought forth, in order that a needful portion of it might be applied in the restoration of the poor captive to consciousness.

This desirable purpose having been achieved, Mr. Woodruff sat up, and looking wildly about him, again asked doubtfully if it really was true that he was free? Our hero eagerly assured him of the fact, and desired him not to

trouble himself farther about it, as he was amongst none but friends, who would take care that no possible harm of any kind should again befal him. He reminded him that he himself was that same Colin Clink who had once before concerted a plan for his escape; entreated him to be calm and collected; and gave him the fullest assurances that all his troubles were now at an end, and that in the course of a short time he should be conveyed to a place where the infamous powers of his enemies should never be able to touch him again. But poor James still seemed incredulous,—lost in uncertainty, and scarcely decided whether to believe his senses, or to conclude that they had forgotten their proper office, and conspired with evil men to persuade him into the belief of a state which had no existence in reality. Colin informed him that the unprincipled villain Doctor Rowel, his brother-in-law, was now in prison, and awaiting his trial on a charge of murder, so that nothing was to be feared from

that otherwise most formidable quarter: while in other respects the most influential persons were now his friends, and would not only secure the liberty he at present possessed, but also take steps to recover everything of which he and his daughter had been so long wrongfully dispossessed. At the name of his daughter James started, — for the memory of her had not before, from over-excitement, awakened in his mind. But when he heard her name,—only her name, and nothing more,—tears gushed from his eyes, and he sobbed convulsively during some minutes.

Colin knew that this passion would give the mind relief, and therefore abstained from farther discourse, and let his tears flow on.

Meantime, however, every necessary means were adopted to provide for an immediate and successful evacuation of the premises. The night was advancing, and every advantage ought to be taken of the cover afforded by darkness. The chain which bound Mr. Wood-

ruff's hands was soon knocked off, and indignantly thrown by honest Roger through the window; while Jerry's long coat — that identical garment which we have seen him previously purchase in the Goswell-road—was forced on to the late prisoner's back, in order to enable him the better to resist that open air to which he was now so unaccustomed.

It must not be supposed that during all this time old Jerry himself had been neglected. When all the necessary precautions to prevent his attempts to resort to any violence on his recovery had been carefully adopted, they turned their attention to his condition. Every means had been used in order to bring him again to a state of sensibility, and at length their efforts had the desired effect. The old man opened his eyes, at first gradually, but at length turned them in piercing scrutiny on the people about him. When he saw Mr. Peter Veriquear, who held firmly one of his feet down upon the mattress,—the

self-same stranger he had that night turned away from his door, — when he beheld his own grandson, Colin, standing at his head, and the man over whom he was put in charge, James Woodruff himself, sitting free at the foot of the bed,—then old Jerry made an effort to get up; but the exertion was too much for him, and he fell back, loudly and deeply cursing all around him, until he became again insensible.

It was not by any means in accordance with Colin's principles or feelings to leave the old man in this state alone, whatever advantages it might afford him for making a safe retreat from the place, and thus securing Mr. Woodruff's safety against any pursuit on the part of Jerry himself, or of such of the people at the house of Doctor Rowel's brother as he might possibly arouse to join in such an expedition. He therefore begged of Roger and Mr. Veriquear to use their utmost exertions in restoring him to

perfect consciousness before they took their departure, in order that no chance of his dying beyond the reach of assistance might possibly happen. Accordingly, after some trouble, he was a second time brought round; and when seemingly in a state to be questioned, Colin told him what their purpose there had been, and demanded to know whether, if they left him entirely at liberty to shift in the best way he could for himself after they were gone, he would agree neither to follow them himself, nor to give any alarm to any other person? — at the same time observing, that unless he would consent to this, he should find himself under the very painful necessity of tying him down to his own bedstead, and so leaving him to whatever fortune Providence might see fit to put in his way. On hearing this proposal, Jerry fell to cursing and swearing in a manner truly fearful, and declared that he would follow them wherever they went, as long as that rascally carcass he in-

habited had strength to put one leg before the other. Nay, he even carried his resentment beyond his mortal powers, and declared that he would track their footsteps as a spirit, after his body had dropped dead, as it might do, upon the road.

Finding all argument utterly useless, Colin at length determined to set out, trusting to the old man's miserable bodily condition for security against alarm or pursuit, without resorting to any coercive measures for detaining him in his present locality.

Accordingly, a short time found Mr. Woodruff and his three friends upon the wide waste of the forest, tracking their way in the dark northwards; while Jerry Clink, in a state of excitement bordering almost on delirium, rolled himself out of bed directly after their departure, with a determined resolution to make his way up to the house of Doctor Rowel's brother, and give the alarm touching what had that night happened.

CHAPTER VI.

A chase by night, and the death of Jerry Clink.

"WHITHER are we bound?" demanded Mr. Woodruff of Colin, as soon as they had reached the open air.

"To Kiddal Hall," replied he. "My father, Mr. Lupton, charged me, in case our attempt succeeded, to convey you there for the present, where most probably he will meet us either on, or shortly after, our arrival. I have provided a vehicle at a village near the forest, which will be ready the moment we reach it, and then all fear of pursuit will be at an end."

The night was still dark, but clear, trans-

parent, and fresh. A healthy breeze swept across the waste, and sighed through the branches of the trees around.

"How I thank God for this!" exclaimed Woodruff, "and you, friendly strangers, whom I can never compensate; for the delight I feel in this liberty is beyond all estimation. It seems incredible to me even now; and the world looks a new place, as if I had risen into another life after a grave. Yet how magnificent it is! — how beautiful it is! The very feel of the earth under my feet, the live wind in my face, and those glorious stars that I have so long and so often looked on, though without this rare and goodly prospect below them!—O God! O God!"

He stretched his hands to heaven, and sunk upon his knees, while the three friends stood silently by unwilling to interrupt him while he poured out his heart in thankfulness and prayer. Fearful, however, of lingering too long, Colin used his influence to urge him

onward, or he would have remained in this mere ecstacy of adoration none can tell how long. Accustomed to darkness, the night suited him; individual flowers and leaves, which to his companions appeared as masses, he could see with separate distinctness; he plucked them with the eager delight of a child; as they strode forward he would linger occasionally to gather the wild berries as though they had been delicious fruit.

This excitement, and the unaccustomed exertion of such walking, at length overcame him, after they had traversed two or three miles of the forest, and, notwithstanding all his endeavours, Mr. Woodruff became incapable of proceeding farther without assistance. Under these circumstances, Mr. Roger Calvert and Peter Veriquear volunteered to carry him, a task which they performed admirably, while Colin sometimes marched before, selecting the most level ground, or lingered behind in the endeavour to ascertain whether old

Jerry had contrived to give any alarm, and set a pursuing party after them.

This precaution of his proved not to be altogether needless As he crouched down amongst the heath, in the endeavour so far to bring the ground over which they had passed into a horizontal line with the sky, so as to enable him to detect whatever upright objects might present themselves upon it, he fancied he beheld certain moving figures in the direction in which they themselves had come. Hereupon Colin requested his friends to hurry forwards as rapidly as possible, while he remained where he was still farther to reconnoitre. His suspicion soon proved to be just. The figures rapidly advanced, until he could distinctly discern five men, one of whom, by his voice, Colin instantly recognised to be Jerry himself. He was exclaiming passionately, and, as far as Colin could catch broken words, was calling down imprecations on his own head, and devoting it with

frantic rage to perdition for having so completely disabled him from following in pursuit with all the expedition which otherwise he could have used.

All his doubts being now satisfied, Colin had nothing to do but press forwards, and hurry his companions also onward. This, however, their burden in great part prevented; and as Mr. Woodruff partly ascertained the cause of so much haste, he became excited to an extreme, and begged of them rather to let him be killed upon the spot in resisting, than ever again see those horrible walls, or endure aught like what he had endured before. Every effort was made to pacify him, and assure him that no power should seize him again; but his new and long-lost liberty was now so dear to him, that the very thought of a possibility of being a second time deprived of it made him tremble like a terrified infant.

As the pursuing party rapidly gained upon

them, and our friends found it impossible to advance with equal celerity, Colin recommended that they should turn aside amongst the brushwood, and endeavour to seek security by hiding, until the other party should have passed, a proposition which was at once adopted; and they soon found a convenient harbour beneath the boughs of an elm, that bent down from a high bank at the foot of which lay a pool of water collected from the rains. While silently standing there, the parties approached, and the voice of old Jerry could distinctly be heard, as he swore that he thought his skull was broken, and he should never survive it; while his discourse in other respects seemed to bespeak a somewhat disordered mind.

How the circumstance happened Colin never could distinctly ascertain; but true it is, that scarcely were they silently congratulating themselves on the success of their stratagem, when a loud cry from Jerry Clink, accom-

panied by a wild rush upon them, announced the fearful fact of their discovery. Mr. Woodruff had previously been seated against the bank, and before him the three friends now stood, prepared and resolved to defend him to the last. Within a few moments a tremendous scuffle and fight ensued, during which Roger Calvert and Peter Veriquear conducted themselves most gallantly, and severely beat three of the assailants between them. Jerry grew half frantic, and yelled with rage, more like a savage uttering his war-whoop than any being of civilised mould. During the confusion, the old man unluckily chanced to receive from some unrecognised hand, whether of friend or opponent was never known, another blow upon the crown, which completed that work which the former had left undone. He was seen to stand stock-still a moment, as though stunned; he tried to utter a curse upon the arm of him who had struck the blow; but exhausted nature refused the

evil promptings of that savage spirit; his tongue sunk for ever silenced, and old Jerry dropped suddenly upon his back, dead. This event, combined with the lesson which Colin and his friends had given to Jerry's associates, put a termination to the engagement. The body of the old man was carried off by them, and Colin and his friends were left to pursue their journey without farther molestation.

In due time the latter party arrived at the village of which Colin had previously made mention, where the vehicle he had provided was immediately put in requisition, and the whole were driven off to the Hall of Kiddal, where they arrived safely in the afternoon of the following day.

As for old Jerry, a coroner's inquest was subsequently held over his body, when the facts of having met his death in the manner above described being clearly established, the

usual verdict was returned. His corpse was committed to the ground, and after that time the matter gradually subsided until it became utterly forgotten.

CHAPTER VII.

Contains matter not to be found anywhere else in this or any other history.

Mr. Lupton was already at the Hall, and prepared to receive our little party when they arrived. There was also awaiting Colin a letter from Jane Calvert, the contents of which went far to destroy that pleasure which else he could not have failed to experience from his present change of fortune, and the triumphant success of the last-recorded enterprise. But before this unpleasant piece of intelligence be farther commented on, it is necessary to record certain other interesting matters, which eventually produced a

material influence, touching one or two of the leading personages of this history.

The story of Mr. Woodruff's liberation, and of his arrival at Kiddal Hall, accompanied by his deliverers, soon became known to the inhabitants of the district; and as the fact of Doctor Rowel's imprisonment, with all the main circumstances leading to and connected with it, had previously created no little sensation amongst them, the presence of James Woodruff excited universal attention. Numbers of idlers might have been seen lounging about the village of Bramleigh, and in the immediate neighbourhood of the Hall, anxious to pick up the smallest scrap of news respecting the strangers from any of the servants, and deeply desirous of catching even the most remote glimpse of any of the personages connected with those proceedings which, in one shape or another, occupied so much of their attention.

Meanwhile Colin caused a special and cau-

tious messenger to be despatched to Fanny Woodruff, for the purpose of informing her, in a manner the least likely to over-excite her feelings, of the arrival of her father at the Squire's mansion, and to appoint a particular hour on the ensuing day, when her meeting with him should take place, it being deemed most advisable on account of both parties to allow some portion of time to elapse before that meeting was permitted. Particular apartments were, in the mean time, appropriated to Mr. Woodruff, as being better adapted to his present state both of body and mind. To recapitulate at length the circumstances attendant on the meeting between poor James Woodruff and his daughter forms no part of my design. It is enough to state, that the feelings of each were wrought upon by that interview to the highest extreme; that hours seemed to them but as minutes; and that night scarcely separated them even temporarily without the bitterest tears.

Some time afterwards, when the condition of all parties would allow of it without pain or danger, an entertainment upon a large scale was given at the Hall, at which every one of the individuals most interested were present, besides a considerable number of the neighbouring gentry, their wives and families, whose sympathies had been aroused by that bitter story of persecution and criminality, of which Mr. Woodruff had been made the victim; and while all lamented the past sorrows of that worthy man, they rejoiced with double feeling at the conclusion which was now put to his sufferings, and extolled in the highest terms the very humblest individual whose instrumentality had been required in the singular adventure that terminated in his release.

On this occasion it was that Mr. Roger Calvert, the blunt and honest brother of Jane, first became acquainted with Fanny Woodruff. Fanny, as has been previously observed, was by no means deficient in per-

sonal attractions, which now were rather heightened in interest than depreciated, by the more delicate character her features had assumed since the period of her first meeting with her father. Grief and anxiety had, if I may so speak, spiritualised her looks, and attached a degree of interest to her general appearance, which it did not possess before; while the devotedness and love with which she watched her father, the eagerness to anticipate his slightest wants, and the patient unwearying watch she kept over him, while yet the yoke of the world into which he had come back sat newly and awkwardly upon him, — all conspired to stamp both her person and character with those amiable qualities which recommend themselves to the notice, and not unfrequently to the love of the truly sensible and discerning.

While Mr. Roger Calvert yet tarried at the Hall, he had frequent opportunities of becoming more intimately conversant with both her-

self and her parent. So favourably did these unpremeditated interviews affect the young man, that it soon became evident that Fanny strongly attracted his attention. And though at the outset she exhibited a degree of reluctance to be wooed, bordering on absolute indifference, and which offered small hope that ever she would consent to be won, — a state of feeling which the presence of Colin contributed not a little to produce, — yet at length her heart relented somewhat; and she found, besides, in the character and disposition of Roger perhaps a better substitute for Colin than the chance of a thousand might give her: a good reason this to her mind for listening with more favour to his suit than she would or could have done to that of another person who might have occupied the same position. She heard Colin, moreover, always express himself in such high terms of his friend, as could not fail to have considerable influence in predisposing her in

his favour. Then, too, there was that strongest tie of all, the demands of gratitude to her lover for the part he had taken in restoring to liberty and his friends a parent whom else she had looked upon as for ever lost to both. This attachment caused Mr. Calvert to prolong his stay considerably beyond his original intention; combined as it was with the pressing solicitations of Mr. Lupton, who would not think of permitting so early a departure to the son of a friend who had been one of his dearest acquaintances even in boyhood.

Fanny, it is perhaps almost unneccessary to relate, had left Lawyer Sylvester's house almost immediately after the happy arrival of her father at Kiddal. The leisure thus afforded her was taken ample advantage of by Roger, whose attentions to his daughter were marked by Mr. Woodruff with deep interest and pleasure: that gentleman feeling that no reward in his power to bestow could ever so much as approach that idea of

return which he entertained for the boundless service that had been rendered him; though the greatest in his power to give, had he even possessed worlds, would yet in his estimation have been the hand of so dear a child, with such a portion on her marriage as would place her in ease for life out of that recovered property which soon he should again obtain.

Thus sanctioned at once by her sense of gratefulness, by the approving smiles of her poor restored father, and the lavish praise bestowed upon the individual who sought her hand by Colin, it is no matter of wonder that her estimation of Roger daily grew more favourable, until at length she fairly yielded to his solicitations, and received him as that certainly accepted lover who was one day to make her his bride.

With respect to Colin's mother, Mrs. Clink, he seized the earliest opportunity afforded by his return into that part of the country to wait upon her with the assurance of his present

happiness from the kindness and liberality of one whom now he knew to be his father, as well as to convey to her from that gentleman—though without explanation—a present of two hundred pounds. Mrs. Clink expressed herself in terms of deep satisfaction at the fortunes which now appeared to be in waiting for her son; but at the same time informed him that she could never enjoy a mother's highest delight and be a daily witness of her child's prosperity and happiness, as it would be more congenial to her own feelings, to carry into execution a design she had some time since formed of retiring to a distant part of the country, where, unknown, and out of sight of all those who, under the circumstances now brought about, might be to her, as she to them, a cause of painful reflection, she could quietly pass the remaining portion of her life in humble endeavours to atone for the one great error of her existence, and hide the troubles it had entailed upon her for ever from the world.

"Circumstances," said she, "too plain to be named, or more particularly alluded to, urge me to adopt this course. Though you are my son, I should find it impossible under these altered prospects to act in everything as a mother's heart would dictate. Though I am your mother, you too would find it still more impossible at all times to act as your filial feelings would prompt you to do. To live so closely together, with these bars between our intercourse, which nothing but the death of — one who I hope will yet, *for your sake*, live long — could not be consistent with either your disposition or mine. It is better, then, that I should quietly retire to some far-off obscurity in which to pass the remainder of my days, and be content to hear occasionally of your happiness, while with humble and contrite feelings of heart, I endeavour to fit myself for that fearful and tremendous appearance before an immortal Judge, which, sooner or later — with this weight of sin upon my soul — I shall be called upon to make."

Colin wept bitterly, while his mother's hands, as she spoke thus, pressed feelingly his own. He saw too much good sense in her remarks to attempt to controvert them, although he strove as much as possible to soften the asperity of those self-accusations with which they were intermingled. He promised her, however, that, so far as his resources would allow, she should be made as comfortable and happy as in this world we can hope to be; and that he would on all occasions omit nothing calculated in any degree to afford her comfort if not entire happiness.

In accordance with this decision, Mrs. Clink scrupulously carried out the plan she had proposed. She retired with a competency to a small village in Derbyshire, where she dwelt in peaceful seclusion many years afterwards; receiving from time to time those affectionate communications from her son which formed in great part at once her company and her consolation.

CHAPTER VIII.

Since all the learned authors of all times have been in the habit of introducing episodes and occasional digressions into their works, by way of relief and additional amusement, I take the present opportunity to follow their example, and introduce a story from the mouth of a certain well-known character, with whom the public has long expressed itself well-pleased.

While Colin remained in the country, he and Roger Calvert occasionally amused themselves by strolling for the day together over the surrounding rural districts. It so happened on one of those occasions that they arrived at the far-famed village of Stragglethorpe; and being

weary with their walk, entered a tavern, over the door of which was suspended a sign of chanticleer, although the head and tail had long since, like Keats's lovers on St. Agnes' Eve, "disappeared into the storm." What the modern artist painted, Time and weather, those "old masters," had rubbed out; but there still remained legible enough in the places defaced the head and tail of a bull, which had on some former occasion been painted underneath; so that at present the body of a gamecock was united with the extremities of the animal which previously occupied his place: thus literally making the same of the sign as Sterne made of Tristram Shandy. Underneath was written the name of Samuel Pogson. Both our travellers recognised it, for both had heard of Samuel before. On entering, they found the landlord taking his first pipe, and a glass of gin-and-water after dinner, in company with Doleman, the parish clerk. Knowing his celebrity as a story-teller, they contrived without much diffi-

culty to draw him into conversation ; and, after some little skirmishing, were indulged by him with the following curious sketch from Nature of a female villager of his who went crazy for love.

Sam Pogson told his story as follows :—

" Just as I'd swallered my tea one night, and was going to charge my pipe, in pops Mester Hubbard, ar 'pot'ecary, and says he with a very rewful countenance on his face, says he,

" ' Mester Pogson, I know you 're fond of seeing wimmin.'

" ' You 're right,' says I, interposing myself between him, ' there 's noat hafe so pritty in my 'pinion as wimmin.'

" ' Then, Mester Pogson,' says he, ' did you iver see one that was mad ? '

" ' Noa,' was my reply ; ' I 've seed 'em very soft—very soft indaed, and I 've seed 'em i' sich tantrums as nobbody could imagine,—'specially when their idees was tickleated about luv and sich ; but I niver seed one that was

rael, downright, stark-staring mad. *That* I should like to see, very pertickler indaed.

"'I thoat you would,' said he, 'and I can gratify you now, for there 's poor Patty Mortimer up town here, has gone mad, and I 'm 'tending her. So you can go wi' mae about seven o'clock to-night, when I go to see her agen.'

"'You 're 'bliging, Mester Hubbard,' says I, 'and I shall be very glad indaed to see her; why, raelly I used to think her one o' th' nicest gels as iver man faither'd; but then, you see, when a gel becomes a gel on her own account, why raelly she doesn't look a bit like her faither ony longer, and fancies herself reg-'larly licensed to go mad, or to do onything else that her feelins leads her nose to.'

"'But,' says he to that, says he, 'she isn't gone mad, Mester Pogson, on her own account, but a-count of Bill Barker up town here; for there he 's gone and pead his distentions to her these four year, and now, do you know, that

vill'in has left her with all her imperceptions in her head,'— them was his words,— 'he 's gone and left her a prey to her own inflections of a very unpleasant natur', and she accordingly has gone mad on 'em, and now demands my sarvices to put her disarrangements to rights agen.'

"When I heared that I felt raither mad all of a sudden myself, and my buzzum inflated with a hot kind of a feel agen that Bill Barker, just as if I was a kettle singing on th' fire, and, says I, 'Mester Hubbard,' says I, 'raelly it 's a gret pity that gel hasn't got niver a brother to stand up for her, and gie her reducer a good wollopping; a very gret pity it is; and her mother,' said I, 'oat to be ashamed of herself, knowing she 's a reg'lar widdy, not to have gone and had a lad as well as a doater, that he might act for her in the place of her faither that now lies i' th' ground. But some wimmin seem as if they had no consideration whativer, and go and have their gels one after another, one

after another, as though they thoat the world was to be made of noat but petticoats.'

"Well, to say noat no more about that, when night comed down we goes, mae and Mester Hubbard, to Patty Mortimer's. She was lodging wi' Mester Sithers, the tealor here in Stragglethorpe, at that time; and Bill Barker was his journeyman, and working i' th' house; and, i' fac', that was the way they first of all got acquainted: for, as I underconstand it, she was raither to blame, becos she pead him more respect than a gel should have done.

"Howiver, as I was saying, mae and Mester Hubbard went down up town to Sithers's; him with his fizzick in hand for her, and mae wi' noat at all. My missis called mae out into th' brewhouse afore I went, and toud me to tak' care what I was about when I got there. 'But,' says I, 'leave that to me, Kitty, for you may 'pend on it I know a dom'd deal better what to be about than either yo' or onybody else can

tell me. Trust mae,' says I, 'for doing iverythink as is straightforard and upright.' And wi' that anser I left her to chew her own cud till sich times as I might come back agen.

"It was a nasty, ill-tempered night, and the wind blowed so hard that raelly it was quite undecent for ony woman to go out. But I didn't care for that, as no wind i' th' world could iver blow *mae* a-one side; so up town we went as hard as we could lay leg to th' ground.

"When we got into th' house, there sot Patty Mortimer directly opposite us, by th' side o' th' fire, wi' her feet on th' fender, just o' this how."

And here Samuel gave a bodily illustration of his meaning by clapping his elbows upon the caps of his knees, his chin within the cup, or rather bason, formed by the palms of his hands, and staring horribly out, like the Gothic spout of some old church when about to pour forth rain-water. This somewhat grotesque

figure caused Mr. Doleman, the sexton, to smile rather irreverently, which put Samuel into a passion.

"Dom it!" exclaimed he, still retaining his very picturesque position, "what do you see to laugh at? Here I 'm trying to look as like Miss Mortimer as I possibly can, just for your enterteanment, and then you go an' laugh at it!"

Doleman denied that he was laughing at that, but at some especial and comical private thought of his own. Which party would ultimately have gained the point, it is not very difficult to say; but at this critical moment the discourse was suddenly interrupted by the startling appearance in the middle of the kitchen of the very young woman herself about whom they were discoursing.

And certainly, to "look on this picture and on this," nobody would have recognised Sam's resemblance to poor Patty in any conceivable thing, save that a nose stood in the centre of

each face, and a mouth opened below it. For whereas the figure of the unfortunate Miss Mortimer was slight and elegant in its natural form,—her face pale, and singularly expressive of that kind of wild resentful grief, which ill-treatment, added to misfortune long-continued, always stamps upon the features; while the person of Mr. Pogson stood about five feet ten,—weighed fourteen stone heavier than the other,—was of a great breadth, and equally straight from the shoulders to the knees. His "human face divine," expressive of a good-natured easy mind, approached somewhat nearer the idea of a round of beef than any other thing; and altogether he seemed just the man you would select to fill a cab in his "own individual self." It requires no stretch of the imagination, therefore, to suppose that Samuel's attempt to screw himself into an imitation of the heroine of his tale was about as successful as might be that of a bear perched on a pole to look like a humming-bird.

"Say nothing — tell nobody!" exclaimed Patty, looking wildly round, as though afraid of being overheard, and unconscious of the presence of the company. "I have done it now—quite done! It was plenty tight enough —plenty. They 'll never find it out."

"Come, come, my gel," said Sam, rising from his chair, and approaching her, "doan't you know where you are?"

She placed her hand firmly on her temples as she gazed at him. "I tell you I hate him!" said she. "But I beg you will not touch me. They want to kill me,—I know they do. And say nothing about that little box. I 've lapp'd him safely in it, and I would not have it dug up again for a King's treasure!"

"I know noat about it," said Sam to his company; "so it would be dom'd odd if I was to tell. But raelly the poor creatur' doesn't know what she 's talking about. She seems to have got a box in her head somehow; but how

she 's got it there puzzles mae like a conhum-drum. I reckon it 's some of her bandboxes or other she 's thinking about, poor thing; as gels often cram their heads wi' sich like as that, and bits of ribbin and wadding."

With which sage reflection he turned round, with the firm intention of inviting the poor unfortunate to take a can of ale gratis, when he found that the attentions of his wife Kitty had anticipated him. She had persuaded the poor lunatic to retire into the sanctum of the bar-parlour, out of the observation of those curious souls who now thronged eagerly from the kitchen to look at and listen to her. Sam followed in a desperately charitable mood; he had seen her—as he was about to describe—on a former occasion, and the sight had interested him in her behalf as deeply almost as though he himself were — what he lamented her want of—a brother or a "faither."

"I 'll tell you what, Sam," remarked Mrs. P., as her face coloured deeply, "you really

are so soft when a woman of any sort is in your road, that I can't bear to see you! You mak' a compleat fewl of yourself o'er all the jades i' th' town."

"Doant agitate your diagram a-thatten," replied Sam very coolly. "If I hadn't a little bit of Christian infection for other people besides arselves, I 'd giv' onybody leave to dust my jacket with a ash plant."

Sam would have said more, but he was interrupted in his protestation by the voice of Patty Mortimer. She wanted to go — she was resolute to go, and go she would. Mr. Pogson thought it unfit that she should be left alone to return home, or perhaps more likely to wander about in the dark, a danger to herself, and a terror to whoever she might meet. He therefore determined to accompany her, notwithstanding that Kitty's face assumed the aspect of a live coal as his ample rear vanished through the doorway.

Once out, Patty did not wait long for Sam's

escort. In other words, according to his own account—

" Wae'd no sooner got to th' door than she whipped her arm from under mine, hoisted her teal up into th' air, and set off like a mad bull up the lane. I bawl'd after her like a butcher; but it was all of no use, except to make her go faster; so I picked my coart-laps up into my hands, that they needn't baulk me by dabbing about, and set off after her in a contrary direction. Yo' see I know'd by th' way she went that she'd have to mak' a gret circumbendibus afore she got far, so I went a contrary wey after her, just to cut off a corner, and catch her the sooner.

" It was a kind of a dark-light night, with a thin shred of moon hung up like half of a shavin' box, and clouds very mutch like lather brushed over th' face o' th' sky, so that I could see my road over th' fields pritty well, though I got rolled once or twice into th' dikes. Yo' all on you know pritty well where Squire

Elkland's plantation comes up top o' th' hill, and th' lane is cut deep down through th' sand-rock below it, and how lonesome it is thereabaut, for there 's no company but them dom'd rabbits niver to be seen there. Well, when I got there, I heared her singing i' th' lane below. So I crep' quietly down among th' bushes overhead, and pep' over th' presapice to see if I could see her. There she was, sitting down on the sand in a raither out-of-th'-wey sort of place, close by a gret rabbit-burrow, just as much at her ease as if she 'd bin sitting and singing i' th' house at home. That sight made mae bemazed, and I stood and stared at her like a post for iver sich a while. At last she begun to scrat th' sand up, which raelly made mae look as intense as if th' eyes of all Hewrup was on her. After a while she actually dug up with noat but her fingers a little box. Howiver, it was about as big as a basket, or as any other box the same size. She took it up, oppen'd th' lid,—took out a decent-

sized summut, that look'd white, and hugg'd it in her arms like ony child. I scratted my britches at that, and says I to myself, 'Sam'el, this is sitch a sarcumstance as may not occur to yo' agen as long as you live. Very likely yo' ve seed a sight to-night that 's a reglar rarity i' natur', and one, perhaps, that 'll mak' yo' remember'd after your body 's put in your box, and buried i' th' same way.' When I 'd made that inflection, I look'd agen, and she was putting it in agen, and hammering th' lid down wi' her fist. After that, she covered it all up wi' sand, same as it was before, and scatter'd summut on it, but what it was I could not see at that time. Though I didn't think it devisable to go near her now, I took care to watch her when she went away, for fear she should tak' it into her head to do herself a hinjury. But as it luckily happened, she slunk straight off to Sithers's by instinct, and, I suppose, went off to bed.

"'Now, Sam'el,' says I to myself, 'there 's

a nut for yo' to crack, and see th' kernel under that sand-heap. She 's gone and buried some treasure very likely, — only it 's very unlikely sitch a poor gel iver had one—that 's the worst on't.' Howiver, I datarmin'd to see, be it what it might ; so I gies myself leg-bail home, lights th' lantern, takes a dust-shovel to dig it up wi', and then creeps back by myself to th' place. When I got there, what do you think I seed ? —(Here, Sukey !—bring mae another sixpenn-'orth o' gin.) — Why, the sand was made up like a little mound i' th' churchyard, and a bough of thorn-blossom was stuck over it for a grave-stone, just as if somebody was buried there. I turn'd very sorry at that, it seem'd so very awful, and I raelly felt all of a sudden as if I saw a gret corpse staring mae i' th' face through th' sand. I could not find in my heart for iver sitch a while to disturb it ; but at last, when I 'd got tired o' waiting, I let fly wi' th' shovel, and scooped th' mound up all at once, as one might a piece of dirt off'n th'

floor. In a bit I got to th' box, and pulled it out wi' triump'. I oppen'd th' lid—

"Yo' did?" asked Doleman, the sexton.

"I oppen'd th' lid," repeated Sam, "and there lay neither more nor less than a babby's corpse."

"Ay," said Doleman, dolefully, "that 's the way they cheat me of my berryins."

"Well," continued Sam, "when I seed that, I dropped smack on my seat on th' floor; for I felt just as if summody had turn'd my stummik inside out. I held th' corpse in my hands, and tried to look at it as much like a hangel as I could. Thinks I to myself, 'What a lucky dog this chap had bin if he 'd bin born a young Pogson, i'stead of what he is. Here he is,' said I, 'broat into th' world like a drop o' rain, only to be dried up agen as soon as he 's got to th' ground.' Ay, lawk! and raelly I felt as if I could almost cry. If Kitty had but had sich a consarn as this, I 'd gie hafe o' the vally o' th' Inn, and all that hings to it, in at th' bargain.

Then I felt of its face; but, poor thing! it felt as if it was made of bees'-wax and brown soap, it was so cold and smooth.

"Well, while I sat ruminating that how, and chewing a very bitter cud indeed, to think how some folks that havn't child'n want 'em, and some as have, fling 'em away as if they was rubbage, I heared a footstep behind me, and afore I could get up or recover myself, a feller laid violent hands on the nape of my coat collar, and cramm'd a constable's staff slap afore my face, wi' a gret big demand for mae to surrender. I dabb'd th' babby down, and tried to get on to my legs; but he'd got the superiority over me, and kep' me fast. There was two more besides him, so I know'd it was no use contending about it just then, though I tou'd him pretty plain th' child was none o' mine, and that I'd on'y fun it i' th' ground like a earth-nut.

"'That may be all very true, Mester Pogson,' said he, 'but yo've got a finger in it,

somehow, and we must tak' you. We know you very well, as you know us, but we must do ar duty. We doan't want to hurt you, and if you're innicent you'll scrape clean out; but at present it looks like a awkward job; the law is very penguinary in these cases, and we shall feel 'bliged if yo'll come along quietly.'

"Says I, 'I'll go along quietly so long as none on you touches me; but if you do, mind, I shall turn agen like a bear.' Says I, 'You think you've catch'd summut, but I'll soon expose what fewls you all are to iverybody.'

"Well, when wae got into the town they begun to turn off, babby under their arm, towards th' round-house. 'But,' says I, 'Nay, nay,—I sha'n't go there, neither. You may mak' me pris'ner in my own house, if you like;' says I, 'I should just like to mak' you all stand sentry at ar door all night for noat, so as to get you well laff't at i' th' morning, and then I should feel satisfied.' That insinniwation was more than they could swaller,—they'd a

tooth for summut sweeter than that, so they dom'd my proposhal altogether, and swore I should go where they liked. I very natterally turned throbstropolous, and swore I wouldn't: so in a bit we com'd to thumping about it, and I whopped 'em pritty decently. Howiver, they were too many for me, and in th' long run walk'd me off to the round-house by main force. Howiver, after they'd lock'd me up, I took my revenge on th' round-house, for I piggled all th' plaster off o' the walls that I could, and dinted th' door like an old hat wi' kicking it. At last I got sleepy, but as I didn't like to go to sleep altogether, I shut only one eye at a time, and so slep' only one hafe of my body at once, while t'other kep' wake.

"Kitty, you may easily guess, seeing I didn't come back of all night, worked herself up into a reg'lar fermentation, till her passion run over, I can assure you, like station.

"Well, next morning, Linnegar, th' constable, comes agen, and away we marches off to Mester

Wild's. Linnegar sadly wanted to know all about it, as we went on th' road; but I kep' my box-lid down, as close as if it was dove-teal'd, till we got afore th' parson's justice. Ay, how bestonish'd he did look to see *mae* there!—I thoat he'd bore me through wi' his eyes; and 'specially when Linnegar toud him how they'd watch'd mae go wi' a gret lantern and shovel to bury a babby i' th' sandhills during th' last night. When he'd done, I set to, and call'd him all th' fewls I could lay my tongue to; and then I oppened wide, i' th' way of explanation, to Mester Wild, and satisfied his appetite very comfortably, that I was as innicent as old milk of onythink o' th' sort. But he said it was a very serious piece of business, and that I should be wanted as a witness to convict Patty Mortimer. He also order'd Linnegar to tak' her into custardy directly, and lodge her i' Wetherton jail. That let me down like an umbrella, for I felt very sorry for her, very sorry, indeed. Howiver, there was

no remedy for it, so what can't be cured must be endured.

"As I was going down town home agen, who should I meet i' th' street but Bill Barker. I stopped him, though he seem'd in a great hurry, just to blow him up well; and yo' may 'pend on it I plastered him over rarely. I blamed him right and left for about a quarter of an hour, and then toud him, that the first chance as iver fell i' my way, I should lick his hide black and blue. That put him in a passion, but I let him to know he'd better tak' care, and not hot his goose too much, or else he'd burn his-self, very likely.

" Next day there was a conquest set on th' body o' th' child at ar house. My missis didn't much like it at first, cos she raither thoat in her own private mind that the babby looked more like *mae* than it should ha' done by rights; but when I held it up and clapped its face close alongside mine, and toud her to compare one wi' t'other, she was 'bliged to confess

there was noat like a trew Pogson about it. After I'd settled her ash on that score, she acted just as a woman would, and began to relent over th' corpse very much. Iver so mony times she said how she wished it was arn.

"When th' jury had viewed th' body, they called mae in, and I toud all about it, just as I've toud you. At th' same time I took care to hoad out a very strong prospect indeed that th' poor gel was as mad as a bear when she did it, in order to compress their minds wi' a proper sense of their dewty in coming to a conclusion. In fac', though th' crowner tried to interpose his-self afore me, and hinder me speaking, I toud 'em plainly that their vardic' oat to be *Accidental Death*, and noat else. But, in spite of that advice, when th' sargeon had bin examined, and he'd deposed that th' child had bin born alive, they went and broat in a vardic' of Wilful Mudder agen th' poor gel just to get her hanged. There hadn't bin a execution in ar part o' th' country for about fifty year,

and many o' them chaps as sot on th' jury longed very much indeed to see one; so they took that opportunity to gie theirselves a chance.

"Well, when th' 'sizes come, Patty was broat to th' bar and tried i' Wetherton town-hall. I was 'bliged to go and tell all th' old rigmarole over agen; and iver so many more folks was summonsed to tell what they know'd about her confinement and sich. — Howiver they couldn't exactly fix it on her at last, though I dar' to say they would have broat her in guilty, hadn't a very curious sarcumstance accrued just afore they could get at their decision.

"You see, after th' poor gel had got into prison, I took my opportunity of seeing Bill Barker in private. I toud him of his villiny first, and then gied him a down-right good wollopping. But I not only worked on his feelin's by basteing him, — I took th' opportunity, while he was almost crying about it,

to talk to him very seriously indaed. I reproached him wi' words as bitter as gall, and then repealed to th' tenderest part of his breast consarnin' innicent babby's rising up agen him at th' Last Day, in order to stand witness of his dasarving to be put into th' hands o' th' divil; till, at last, I broat watter into his eyes, and made him acknowledge his wickedness. Frum that time up to th' day o' th' trial, he seemed very dejected, and used to slink about th' village more like a pump than a man. He had a summut on his mind, it was plain, but what it was nobbody know'd; only iverybody thoat it couldn't be less than a quarter of a ton weight at least.

" Well, on th' dey o' th' trial, summody toud him that his old sweetheart, Patty Mortimer, was going to be condemn'd to be hanged. He started up all of a sudden, and vow'd to God she should niver be hanged while he was alive, for it was *him* that had killed th' child, and not her. So he went slap off and made a straight-

for'ard confession o' th' whole consarn, in which he said that as he know'd his needle wouldn't support him, and hafe-a-crown a week for his off-shoot, which th' parish would have made him pey, — he was suddenly stimulated by th' divil to tak' advantage when Patty's back was turn'd and smother it i' bed. Some folks thoat he invented that story o' porpus to get Patty off, and some agen believed it to be trew. When Patty heard what he'd said, she fell down in a fit; but after she had come to herself agen, she said she wanted to die if Bill did, and then confess'd that she helped him to smother th' babby. Bill said she didn't, and she said she did; so th' jury hardly know'd who to believe. Howiver, at last, upon th' whole evidence o' th' case, they fun 'em boarth guilty, and th' judge order'd him to be hung, and her to go to prison for two year.

"Dey afore th' execution, I 'plied for leave to go and see him, just for th' sake of comforting his poor soul afore he went; but I

fun a fat, white-faced parson had got there afore me, and was telling him all about brimstone and divils, and what a dom'd place he'd get into if he didn't turn and get saved through grace. There was time for him yet, he said, and the ship was big enough to take on board all the poor souls now floundering in the deeps of perdition and sin. Bill said he never doubted that; only he hadn't become one of their crew before, because he'd always thoat he should have to pay so very dear for his passage, and *that* he couldn't afford.

"I laff'd broad out, 'raight i' th' parson's face, at that; but he looked very grave indaed.

"'I am not 'dressing myself to you, my good man,' says he.

"In a very little while after, he shut up shop and walked off, but he niver said 'Good morning' to *mae* as he went. I' fac', he acted just as though I was a post i' th' room; but I

took care to show him he was mista'en, for, as soon as he got to th' door, I blowed my nose as loud as iver I could, just to let him see I was quite as lively and viggerous as he was, if not more so.

"When he was gone, I begun to talk to Bill, and gie him all the consolation as lay in my power. I toud him I felt raither sorry to see him come to th' gallus at last, although I thoat he very well desarved it. 'But then,' says I, 'yo' are aware, Bill, that yo' have to thank your faither for a good deal of what yo've come to. Old Barker,' says I, 'iverybody i' th' town knows, has set yo' a bad example frum th' beginning; though if anybody hinted at it he down'd 'em like a trooper for their trouble.' Says I, 'I myself once cracked a pretty decent joke on him about it, and though it was all done for fun, without ony meaning of harm in the world, he 's niver forgiv'n me from that day to this; on the other hand, he 's took ivery opportunity of abusing me behind my back, though

he niver had courage to dew it afore my face.' Says I, — 'If he was hanged in your place, Bill, th' gallus would carry a dom'd deal bigger load of viciousness than iver it will wi' you hanging to it.'

"As that sort of consolation seemed to do him good, I giv him a little more on't, and then left him to his own inflections till sich time as he went to th' drop.

"On th' Monday, I went to see him hung; and as he was dry, I geed him a orange from among th' crowd as he went along i' th' cart. 'Bill,' says I, 'I can't do no more for you, but that suck is better than noat.'

"After he was cut down and sent to the hospittle, some o' the surgeons dissected him; and they fun' three needles and a bodkin, besides two pieces of blew cloth, in his stummick. Mester Higginbottom accounted for it by saying he'd swallow'd 'em accidentally, by putting 'em in his mouth when he was at work.

"As for poor Patty Mortimer, they hadn't

much trouble with her, for she died about three weeks after she went to prison."

Having concluded his tale, Sam applied himself to his pipe and gin and water with a degree of assiduity that promised very early to make ample amends for the loss of time which the relation of his narrative had occasioned; while Colin and his friend took their departure homewards.

CHAPTER IX.

Tells of trouble in love, and trouble after marriage. Miss Jenny is persuaded by Mrs. Lupton to abandon her affection for Colin.

Let us now resume the thread of our story, and begin with that communication from Miss Calvert to Colin, previously adverted to as the cause of much pain to him. It ran as follows:—

"Since Mr. Clink quitted our now forsaken-looking house at———, my mother has had much to say to me,—oh, too much that it is impossible to tell again, and that I am most unhappy in ever having heard. I know not

why it is I should have been destined to so much trouble, for I never wilfully harmed one human creature even by a word, nor ever injured the meanest thing that had a life to enjoy, and which the Creator had made for its own enjoyment. Perhaps it is the will of Heaven that this grief should come upon me to try what virtue of resignation to its will I may possess. And if so, then indeed have I been sorely tried, most acutely probed and searched. During your absence, it seems to have become more fixedly my mother's intention that I shall never be happy. She has expressed her urgent desire that I would beg of you to forget me, and now you are away, make no endeavour ever to see me even once again. I never slept a wink, but cried, and prayed for you, my dearest Colin, all night upon my pillow. I am very ill now, and can scarcely do anything but weep. However, I will make my heart as strong as I can, for I foresee it has a terrible task to undergo. Were I of that reli-

gion which permits such things, I would now go into a convent, where no one should ever know my thoughts but Heaven; where I could ask on my knees, day and night, for forgiveness for those thoughts that I have not power to prevent; and where no eye that now knows me, should ever again see how pitiable and heart-broken a creature is even so soon made of the once happy, though now too wretched, but still devotedly affectionate—

"J. C."

I cannot better describe the effect produced upon Colin's mind by the perusal of this epistle, than by stating that within ten minutes afterwards, he formed a dozen different and very desperate determinations to rescue his mistress from her trouble, each one of which respectively was abandoned again almost as soon as formed. He would hurry back to London, — remonstrate with Mr. and Mrs. Calvert. No, on second thoughts, he would

not do that. He would write to Jane herself, and beseech her to calm her mind and wait with patience in the hope that happiness was still in store for them. And yet, what would be the utility of that? Would it not be preferable to act with spirit, and at once give up all thoughts of maintaining his courtship any longer?—or more advisable, or desirable, or prudent, or proper, to do—what? In fact he felt absolutely puzzled, and could not tell. In this dilemma he laid Miss Calvert's letter before her brother Roger, who at once flatly declared that if it were his case, if he happened unluckily to be similarly circumstanced with respect to Fanny Woodruff, as was Colin with regard to his sister Jane, he would make up his mind to run away with her at once, get married, and leave the old folks to reconcile themselves to the event in the best manner they might.

This suggestion wonderfully coincided with Colin's present state, both of feeling and think-

ing; he felt quite astonished that he had not hit upon the same expedient himself; but determined to adopt it without farther loss of time. And in all probability he would have done so within the shortest given space from that day, more especially as his friend Roger volunteered to write to Jane advising her to consent to that mode of settling matters, — had not an event occurred which for the present caused him to set his design entirely aside. This was no other than the arrival at the Hall of that long absent lady, of whom lately we have heard so little mention, the amiable Mrs. Lupton.

Colin happened to be wandering solitarily in the gardens, musing sadly over the subject of his love, when the carriage drove up that brought the Squire's lady once more back to that home which she loved best, but which it had not been her fate in life to enjoy. As the young man watched, he observed a female anxiously gazing through one of the windows,

and endeavouring to obtain a first glimpse of those old walls which to her spoke so eloquently, so mournfully of past times, of years of happiness once, and only once, anticipated when she first entered them a bride; but of years of unhappiness realized, of bright visions faded; and sad remindings that the silver chain of a woman's dearest hopes had been snapped asunder, ay, even at the very moment when most the busy mind and hopeful heart had with bootless industry been employed in linking it together!

When the carriage stopped, he saw that a lady descended from it attended by two females, whose assistance appeared needful to enable her to alight with safety, and to walk into the house. As she stood upon the ground, our hero was struck with the elegance of her figure; although her countenance plainly denoted in its worn and anxious beauty that she was one of those whom trouble unrevealed has destined to "grow old in youth, and die ere middle age."

As she passed up the pathway, supported by the arms of her attendants, she stopped to pluck the first rose that came to hand.

"There," said she, gazing on it with an expression of countenance which might most properly be termed affectionate, "I love this flower—though it seems a fading one—better for the ground it grew on, the air it lived in, and the eyes—it may be—that have looked upon it;—I say the eyes that may have looked upon it, for he is my husband still, and this is my natural home;—I love it better, I tell you, than if it were grown in Paradise, and had been tended by an angel."

The sun shone brilliantly; and as her face was turned upwards, Colin saw distinctly that her bright blue eyes were not tearless, nor the heart within that bosom at such peace as the lovely creature it gave life to seemed to merit.

Already had the Squire apprised him of the expected arrival of his wife, and therefore Co-

lin felt no doubt that in the individual before him he now saw Mrs. Lupton. Nor in this belief was he mistaken. As she entered the hall she regarded everything — the minute equally with the great—with that degree of interest which any individual might be supposed to feel, who after many years should turn over anew the leaves of some old record of their by-gone life, wherein was shown again the past as now existing; save that it now looked upon no future of possible joy or rest, unless in that world which, happily, is beyond man's reach to darken or make sad.

As early after Mrs. Lupton's arrival as was consistent with a proper consideration of her state of health, and the quietude necessary after the fatigue of the journey she had undergone, Mr. Lupton desired and obtained an interview with her alone, which lasted during a space of four or five hours. In the course of that time communications of deep interest to

both parties must have been made, as it was observed that more than once the services of Mrs. Lupton's attendants were required in order to save her from fainting, while the eyes of her husband evidently betrayed that even on his part their conversation had not been conducted without tears.

That same evening Mr. Lupton conducted Colin into the apartment where his lady was sitting, and presented him with the remark, "This, madam, is the young man of whom I have before spoken." A gentle inclination seemed to mark that she perfectly understood what was said and done, although the terms in which her reply was couched evidently betrayed that the long years which had elapsed since last we saw her affecting interview with Miss Mary Shirley in that same old hall, had produced no permanent restoration of the then partly overthrown and too deeply troubled mind. She looked in Colin's face fixedly, and

apparently without emotion; and although it is, perhaps, needless to add, she had never seen him before, she remarked—

"Yes; I have the pleasure of knowing him well. I remember that face as well—nay better—better than any other in the world; though it is more than twenty years since I saw it before."

It has already been remarked that Colin bore a more than common resemblance to the Squire.

"And when," she continued, "when shall I see it again? — Never more! I shall never see it again. It went from me soon after I was wed."

"Now pray be calm," interposed Mr. Lupton, in a persuasive and kind tone, when he found that the agitation and excitement resulting from what had so recently passed between them had produced a temporary recurrence of her disorder. "Be calm, madam, and we will talk these matters over at some future time."

"And this favour," continued Mrs. Lupton, "I shall beg of you particularly: I would have no one put me out of this house any more till the end; for though there are so many wicked people about that want to lead me astray, I will endure everything patiently, and soon get me out of the way where no man's snares shall ravel me again."

Under the unhappy and painful circumstance of this temporary alienation of mind having thus again occurred, Mr. Lupton and Colin very properly retired from the room, leaving the unfortunate lady in the hands of her female attendants, one amongst whom was her old companion Miss Shirley.

"Mary!" whispered Mrs. Lupton, as the last-named individual approached her, "I have seen Walter Lupton again, just as when he used to see me at my father's—but I am resolved I will not marry him. Men do so flatter us! And in a week after we find ourselves more lonely than before we knew anybody.

This beauty is all our ruin. The pretty apple soon goes, Mary, but the crab hangs till Christmas.

> Oh, each a ribbon of white shall have,
> And a dead flower be carried before her!

Then there 's that Jenny Calvert too. I have loved that girl ever since she was born: she is a dear good creature, Mary,—a pretty sweet thing; but she cries just like one of the wicked, so there seems the same dish for all of us. Now, I tell her, never to marry one of Walter Lupton's friends, else we may be all alike; and I would not have her like me, not for a silver penny six times counted!"

"But I understand," replied Miss Shirley, "that he is a very worthy young man, and that Jane is deeply in love with him. She cries for what she has not—not over what she has."

"Then let her have him by all means," answered Mrs. Lupton; "for if the girl love so

much, she must be unhappy to her life's end without him; and as there is a chance that all men may not be alike, and all women not so unfortunate as I—most unfortunate—I would advise her to try that chance. I would have her happy, as she most deserves."

Not to prolong the description of this and similar painful scenes, be it sufficient to state that, after the lapse of a few days, when Colin was again introduced to her, Mrs. Lupton had fully recovered her self-possession, and perfectly comprehended certain arrangements which Mr. Lupton had mentioned to her touching that young man whom he intended to make his heir, and whose parentage was no longer to her a mystery. In these arrangements she quietly acquiesced, not because she felt any interest in them, or would allow herself in any manner to acknowledge that she could in the least be identified with the young man whom Mr. Lupton had now introduced to the house; but simply because her husband had proposed

and desired them. At the same time, while his every wish was hers, personally she felt that degree of indifference, respecting any arrangements he might make, not unusual with individuals who have been long hopeless of all happiness, so far as the present life is concerned, and who, consequently, contemplate the world to come as their only place of refuge and of rest, while the present, with all its pleasures, its anxieties, and its affairs, proportionably sinks in their estimation, as scarcely worthy even of a moment's serious consideration.

Whether this feeling was unconsciously accelerated by the closeness of an event which shortly after happened, and which—happily, perhaps, it may be deemed—put an end to all Mrs. Lupton's earthly sorrows, I will not pretend to divine; yet it has occasionally been asserted that the nearness of death (although at the time unknown) will often produce those exhibitions of sentiment and feeling,

as regards the things of this world, which are never so fully made under any other circumstances. It is not for the writer of this history to speculate on such a subject; with facts alone has he to do: and, therefore, the reader must here be informed that, now Mrs. Lupton's proper faculties had returned, she strenuously opposed—notwithstanding what we have previously recorded as having escaped from her lips — the marriage of her young friend, Miss Calvert, with Colin. On that one question only did she evince the least interest in anything connected with him; but no sooner was she made aware that he was the object of that affection which had caused Miss Calvert so much trouble, than she retired to her room, and, without delay, addressed to her the following communication, dated from the Hall:—

"Believe me, my dearest Jenny, when I express to you the pain I feel in writing to you on

such an occasion as the present, and in obtruding my sentiments upon you respecting a subject of such deep interest to your own heart, that upon the next step you take in it may probably depend your happiness or misery during the whole of your after-life. But as I am not happy, and have felt too grievously the impossibility of being made so any more in this world, it will not be difficult for you to credit my motives in wishing you to think, only *think*, how, by an ill-considered proceeding, you may do that in one moment which a whole after-life of pain can never remedy, and from which nothing but the grave can afford you a refuge. The young gentleman who has been introduced to you is not exactly what he has been represented — Mr. Lupton's friend. He is something more. Would that he were *my* son, for your dear sake! Then, my dearest girl, should I wish him no higher happiness than the possession of so good and true a creature, nor you any better love and care than I

should delight in exercising towards you. It is unfit that I should tell you more than this; though possibly your own good sense may enable you to supply the deficiency. If you *can* give up this disastrous affection, let me implore you to do so. I fear it cannot end in any happiness. Why I say so, I scarcely know; but I feel that fear most deeply. Perhaps my own wretchedness makes me doubt whether there be such a state as happiness really to be met with, in any shape, in the world. But whatever the cause, let me again and again, as you regard the last words of a true friend, beseech you never to consent to such a match as would make you mistress of this unhappy and mournful house. I know everything, and warn you advisedly.

"Ever and for ever

"Your affectionate

"Elizabeth Lupton."

By a singular coincidence, the same post

which placed the above in Miss Calvert's hands, also conveyed to her two others: — one from Colin, and the other from her brother Roger. Colin's was opened the first.—It contained all those passionate appeals and protestations which, from a person so circumstanced, might naturally have been expected. Judging from this epistle, Colin was in a state of desperation, scarcely to be sufficiently described; although he concluded by expressing his determination never to relinquish his suit, though all the powers of earth conspired to oppose him, or even Jane herself should be induced by her supposed friends to resist his addresses. But while he possessed the consciousness of her eternal affection, it was utterly impossible for him by any means to do otherwise than persist through all trials until fortune should be compelled at length to crown his hopes.

This spirited production at first inspired poor half-heart-broken Jane with momentary hope; the more especially so as she found,

too, on opening her brother Roger's letter, that he also advised her by no means to sacrifice her own happiness—if her happiness really did depend upon the event of this attachment —merely out of compliance, however otherwise desirable, with the wishes of those who could take no share from off her bosom of the load which their own agency had once placed there. Roger reminded her, that while others rejoiced, she might have to suffer; and that for his own part he never wished to see the day when his sister might possibly pine away her solitary hours in grief, which it was likely would hurry her to the grave, instead of being the happy wife of a young man whom she loved, and who, as far as he could observe, very well merited her attachment. At the same time, he declared in the most positive terms, that the real objection urged by her parents and friends against Colin, was not, in his opinion, a valid one. That it did not in the remotest degree touch the character or qualifications of the

youth himself, and ought never to have been by any means so pertinaciously insisted on.

These remarks in some degree counteracted the bitterness of those which had made her weep over her friend Mrs. Lupton's letter, although they served in some degree to assist her in drawing that correct conclusion as to the true cause of objection, which now was rendered sufficiently evident to her mind. Yes, now she conjectured it:—her lover was not Mrs. Lupton's son, but he was more to Mr. Lupton than a friend. Besides, these matters had not been altogether unknown to her family during some years past; and, therefore, a certainty almost seemed to exist that her father and mother saw in the parentage of Colin the bar to their future union.

How long Jane grieved over this discovery and these letters, I need not say, but grieve she did, until some that had known her slightly knew her not again; and those who had known her best became most deeply certain, that if this

was suffered to continue, a light heart was for ever exchanged for a sad one, and the creature whose very presence had diffused happiness, was converted into one of those melancholy beings over whose mind an everlasting cloud seems to have settled; whose looks instantaneously demand our pity, we scarce know why, and whose very bodily existence appears to become spectral and unearthly, while yet they sit at our table, or muse statue-like with melancholy by our hearth. Then it was that the obstinate began to soften, the strict to relax, the determined to think that continued opposition to the ways of the heart is too cruel to be always maintained. Everybody loved poor Jane, and everybody grieved to see her grief. So at length they proceeded from the direct exertion of counter influences upon her, to the tacitly understood holding out of hope, and the sometimes expressed possibility that matters might yet be ultimately arranged to her satisfaction.

Meanwhile, as the Squire's object in introducing his son to Mrs. Lupton had been fulfilled, Colin took the earliest opportunity, in company with Roger Calvert, to return to London, and throw himself with passionate sorrow before his mistress. But before we follow him thither, and record his fortunes, the reader will, perhaps, be pleased to hear something respecting certain other of the characters who have figured in this book, to whose interest, be it hoped, he does not feel altogether indifferent.

CHAPTER X.

A corpse missing. The trial. The verdict. The effect of it. A fearful night scene at Nabbfield.

In order that the charge brought against Doctor Rowel, of having been guilty of the murder of Lawyer Skinwell, might if possible be clearly substantiated, Mr. Lupton had not omitted any means at all likely to conduce towards that end; not the least important of which was the disinterment of the deceased's coffin from its grave, in the churchyard of Bramleigh, where it had been laid. This curious operation was undertaken with as much quietness as such an unusual piece of business can reasonably be supposed to have been per-

formed; and a careful examination would, doubtless, have taken place in the porch of the church, had it not been soon discovered, to everybody's amazement, on opening the grave, that somebody had been there before, and the corpse was gone. This fact was no sooner ascertained than speculations innumerable, and of every variety, started into existence with the suddenness of a batch of summer flies; and strange stories were published, which had never so much as been dreamed of before, by the very parties who now gave instant birth to them, of dim lights having been seen, or supposed to have been seen, in the churchyard after dark; of something like the sound of a spade having been once heard there in the dead of night,—though, when heard, or what favoured mortal had heard it, could not precisely be made out:—as well as of suspicious looking strangers having, at one time, been observed staring over the yard wall, as though marking in the mind's eye some spot which was destined

to become the scene of future dark and mysterious operations.

All these things however ended, as such things usually do, exactly where they began. The vulgar, that is, nine hundred and ninety-nine at least, out of every thousand, swallowed them with "intense interest;" while the place itself, in which Mr. Skinwell's remains had once been deposited, and from which they had also been thus unaccountably abstracted, became as a standing wonder throughout the parish, and was daily visited and marvelled at by bewildered and curious bipeds of both sexes. Certain parties who had had the misfortune to fall under Mr. Skinwell's hands during his lifetime, went so far as to insinuate that a lawyer's corpse was a very tempting bit to the old gentleman himself, and a likely thing—nothing more so—to have been carried off by him; but this insinuation was commonly thought at once so palpably libellous, that though many heard, few took the trouble to

repeat it. Hence, like many other productions of a different description, but presumed by their authors to be equally able, it died a natural death very shortly after it was born. The mystery, however, attending this circumstance was certainly never positively cleared up; although on the examination of Doctor Rowel's establishment at Nabbfield, some time afterwards, a rather curious circumstance occurred, which gave strong ground for suspicion, that as that gentleman had been considerably cut up by the lawyer when alive, he had seized his opportunity to return the compliment, and cut him up, in another fashion, after his departure. But this incident will better appear in another place.

Every other description of evidence which Mr. Lupton could possibly procure was obtained and arranged for the Doctor's anticipated trial; although the failure of that which might have been added by the abovenamed investigation, could it have taken place, was regretted

by all parties desirous of bringing the supposed culprit to justice, as unfortunate in the extreme.

While the Doctor soliloquized in a cell of the castle at York, whither he had been removed between the time of which we are now speaking and that at which we last parted with him, information was conveyed to him by his brother, of the rescue of James Woodruff, by Colin and his party, and the subsequent event of old Jerry Clink's death. His brother-in-law being thus free, Doctor Rowel gave up everything as lost; and during some time after the receipt of the news, he remained sunk in a state of hopelessness and stupor as deserved as it was deplorable. Regarding himself as now abandoned altogether by that fortune which during so many years had permitted his infamous practices and designs, he so far lost all spirit as to sink into one of the most abject creatures that ever breathed the breath of life. Painfully fearful of the end which seemed to be awaiting him, his sole anxiety was to contrive

means for averting the threatened fate, and of prolonging that life which few, save himself, valued at more than a rope's end. Under these circumstances, and dreading the course which Mr. Woodruff himself might see fitting to adopt, the doctor caused a formal communication to be made to that injured individual, through the agency of Mr. Lupton, in which he bound himself not only to restore the estate of Charnwood, which had been so long withheld from him, but also to make every restitution in his power to grant, for the injuries he had sustained; injuries indeed for which in reality no compensation could atone, but which he yet trusted might possibly be regarded with some feeling of forgiveness and mercy, when his awful situation in other respects came to be considered.

"Unworthy," remarked Mr. Woodruff, when this statement was made to him,—"undeserving and unworthy as that man is, whom I cannot ever again name as a relation, or scarcely con-

sider even in the common light of an ordinary human being,—and hideous even to remember as are the tortures of mind and body I have undergone through conduct on his part which might well be considered as little less than infernal,—yet I do not feel disposed to gratify any feeling of revenge, by demanding the infliction of that extreme punishment which doubtless the laws would allow. I have suffered, but those sufferings are past; they cannot be alleviated in the least by the sufferings of another. If he even died upon a scaffold, what consolation would that bring to me? To know that he pined in prison as I have done, and wore away interminable days, nights, and years, in exquisite pain,—would not give me any satisfaction. I know too well what that sorrow is, ever to wish it endured by even the most worthless and criminal wretch alive. No; all I wish that man to do is, to be left to the reflection that all his stratagems have, at length, failed; that the evil labours of so many years

have produced him only a harvest of wretchedness. I would leave his own past actions to be the rack on which—if he have any spark of humanity left within him—his spirit must eventually be broken. For the rest,—the great and fearful trial of the future,—*that* lies between Heaven and him ;—and a frightful contemplation it must prove !"

Although every person who heard these sentiments from Mr. Woodruff's mouth, could not but feel deeply the charity and worthiness of that good and injured man, yet the general sentiment appeared to be that in leaning towards the guilty Doctor, and overlooking the irreparable injuries he had himself sustained, he forgot justice in his anxiety for mercy, and allowed that degree of criminality to escape to which the common opinion of mankind at large would apportion punishment of considerable severity.

Nevertheless, Mr. Woodruff remained uninfluenced by those and many similar remarks;

and notwithstanding even the persuasions and advice of Mr. Lupton himself, persisted in his determination to abide by the opinions he had already expressed, and leave his cruel brother-in-law without other punishment than that which might possibly be awarded to him on his forthcoming trial; or such as his own conscience, and now everlastingly blighted prospects, would in all probability render inevitable.

Nor, in pursuing this charitable and moderate line of conduct was Mr. Woodruff, as the event proved, at all mistaken; since a calamity more fearful in its nature than any infliction of the criminal laws could possibly have been—more terrible to contemplate than even an ignominious death itself, subsequently befel the Doctor, and rendered him to the last hour of his life an object at once of pity, detestation, and fear. It seemed, indeed, that in this terrible visitation, Providence had specially intended to exhibit such an instance of that

retributive justice which crime, though it escape the laws of man, not unfrequently entails upon itself from the violated laws of nature, as should not only punish the guilty individual himself, but stand as a solemn and striking warning to all who might become acquainted with his story, that though sin and evil may seem to bask securely in the sunshine for awhile, their time of darkness and pain must come, as surely as midnight followeth the noon.

While the period fixed for his trial was drawing on, the constabulary of the district made themselves uncommonly active in ferreting out every scrap of evidence, as well as much that amounted to no evidence at all, in the hope of fixing the guilt beyond all doubt upon the shoulders of a man to whom everybody secretly believed it to belong, although many expressed their fears that the fact could never be sufficiently established to warrant a jury in pronouncing the doctor's doom.

The whole circumstances preceding and attendant on the case were of such an unusual nature, and had now become in their leading particulars so well known, that when the day of trial at length actually arrived, the most extraordinary interest was evinced by the public to get admitted into the court, or obtain even the most passing glimpse of the prisoner. Many persons came from distant parts of the country in order to be present during this extraordinary investigation; and the yards and precincts of the castle were crowded during the whole time it lasted by a multitude of anxious and patient people, whose curiosity kept them in an inexhaustible state of discussional fermentation from daylight till many hours after dark on each day of the trial. At the same time the village of Bramleigh exhibited such a scene of bustle and stir as had no parallel "within the memory," as the newspapers stated, "of the oldest inhabitant of the place." The village pot-house was literally be-

sieged; the price of ale was temporarily raised, or, what amounts to exactly the same thing, the quality of it was materially lowered, while it was sold for the same money; almost every flitch of bacon in the parish seemed placed in imminent jeopardy of being sacrificed; the butcher declared he never did so much business in his life before; and happy were all those fortunate cottagers whose hens behaved handsome enough to lay an egg every day, without missing Sundays.

All this hubbub and tumult arose in consequence of the great influx of visiters to inspect, as far as the walls would allow them, the Doctor's establishment at Nabbfield; to see the house where Mr. Skinwell had died, and the churchyard wherein his remains had been deposited. Nor did it in any material degree become lessened for several weeks after.

It is not my purpose to give the details of this singular trial, or to follow through all its various ramifications that mass of strong cir-

cumstantial evidence which the industry of the lower members of the executive had accumulated. This is already sufficiently made known to the reader in the scenes through which he has passed with me during the earlier portions of this history. Neither is it needful to state more on the other side, than that a most elaborate and able defence was made by an eminent counsel retained on the part of the prisoner;—a defence which in many respects had the effect of turning the heads of the jury of Yorkshiremen exactly the contrary way to that wherein they had viewed the case before.

At length his lordship summed up in an address to the sagacious body last mentioned, which occupied more than three hours in the delivery; after which the jury retired to cogitate upon the matter during a space of several hours longer. The first result of this was, its being signified to the court that they could not agree to a verdict. Farther deliberation was insisted on; and after about four hours more

study and riddling of the matter, unanimity in opinion was obtained. They returned into court a few minutes before midnight, and before a breathless audience pronounced a verdict of Not Guilty. No sooner was it uttered, than the prisoner himself dropped insensible in the dock. The people in the court murmured. The words Not Guilty were instantaneously repeated on the stairs, and again outside, like magic. They ran with the rapidity of lightning down a wire, firing nearly every bosom present with indignation. The multitude almost yelled for the murderer's blood. But the verdict had gone forth, and a jury of his countrymen had pronounced him innocent. They cried for him to be brought forth and set at liberty amongst them; while some more desperately threatened to wait till he came out, to sentence him over again, and execute him on the spot. The time of night, the darkness that reigned above and around, the fearful passions of the mob now aroused in some instances almost to frenzy by

communication and collision, all combined to render the scene that almost immediately ensued, one never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it.

Under all the circumstances of the case, it will not, for an instant, be supposed that Dr. Rowel was set at liberty that night. For his own sake there was but one course to pursue, and that was, to detain him within the precincts of the castle, in order to ensure his safety, and on the morrow to convey him privately away at an hour too early for the public to be made aware of his departure. Afterwards the crowd outside, evincing no disposition to disperse, was driven away by the aid of the police. Some of them, however, disappointed in this, assembled again, almost as though by common consent, at some little distance outside the walls of the city, and nigh a convent of nuns, which stands by the side of the Leeds road. The cry here soon became "For Nabbfield!" The spirit of destruction

had arisen amongst them, and the fierce threat of fire had succeeded that of blood.

In the dead of night, under a black heaven that prevented almost anything being seen, a dense press of men moved rapidly but stealthily off along road, field, or farm, over river, fence, or garden, in a direction that offered the straightest line between York and Nabb-field. Scarcely a word was said, or an audible breath drawn, during this fearful march; though many were the heavy, pointed stakes drawn from the hedges in their path, many the rails and branches torn down, and converted silently into clubs, as they proceeded. The dire determination of mischief, mistaken for justice, which existed in more than a hundred breasts, seemed gathered into one fierce, dark power, hurrying headlong and irresistibly to its work of desolation, if not of death.

Their outset had not been observed from the

city; and none, save, perhaps, some late and solitary farm servant, peeping fearfully from her lighted window when the dog barked, and the tramp and crash were heard as they passed below, knew of them on their road; and even then a few minutes' wonder who they were, and what they were going to do, followed perhaps by a dream of farms on fire, or poaching conflicts in the woods, was all that ensued. But nobody followed them. Like a meteor that falls unseen when the world is asleep, that little band was only known to have been by the trail of destruction, the dint in the earth it left behind it. Once only in its course was it distinctly recognised. In the very heart, as it were, of deep and peaceful sleep, the Hall of Kiddal was startled by a great and prolonged shout beneath its walls—a huzza three times repeated from above a hundred tongues, in which the names of Woodruff, Lupton, and Colin were distinctly heard; and in the next

moment all was again as still as though spirits had given birth to those sounds, and then fled upon the next blast that whistled by.

In comparatively a brief time afterwards, the walls of Nabbfield were scaled; the gardens were trampled down, the trees uprooted, and the ponds in them drained dry. All this was done in silence: the place still slept in imagined security. But next came the thundering at doors, the tearing down of shutters, the smashing of glass, and, amidst all this, the shrieks and cries of the now-aroused inhabitants, though scarcely sensible from fear, astonishment, and drowsiness. The battle had begun, and the invading party had entered the premises.

Scattered up and down the house might now have been seen numbers of exasperated and desperate men, with their faces blackened, and otherwise disguised, so as to render recognition next almost to impossible. Their first object seemed to be, the seizure and security

of the people who had the establishment in charge and keeping; and as this task, since the imprisonment of the Doctor, had devolved almost entirely upon his own wife, the strong man Robson, with their usual assistants, and a few additional ones, the force that had thus suddenly appeared against them found little or no difficulty in effecting their object. Robson himself had started up on hearing the noise produced by the first assault, and made his way, half-dressed, into one of the lower rooms, where he soon encountered half-a-dozen of the men already described. Thinking the disturbance had arisen in consequence of some of the patients having broken from their cells, he began to call upon them, in his usual manner, to submit to their keeper, whom, he doubted not, they would instantly recognise; but he was soon convinced of his mistake when he found himself inextricably seized by many arms at once, and, at the same moment, informed, by those who held him, that if he

were not quiet, both in limb and tongue, they should knock him in the head without any further ceremony. They also told him they had come to destroy for ever that execrable establishment, and to set all the people confined there free; for it seemed to be the general opinion amongst them, that in the cases of all those unfortunate persons, as well as in that of Mr. Woodruff, injustice and robbery must necessarily have been committed, and not a single lunatic was really to be found upon the premises.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Rowel, the Doctor's wife, had contrived to escape out of her room, and take refuge in a small outhouse, not far off; where, along with two of her maids, she remained shivering with cold and terror until all was over.

Many others of the assistants and dependants of the establishment having been secured, a portion of the mob proceeded to pile up the furniture, pictures, &c., in the middle of the

rooms, or to carry it out upon the lawn in front of the house, and set it on fire; while others, having now armed themselves with pokers, hammers, and other more effective weapons,— flew to the various departments of the house, and, by main force, broke open the cells and let out all such of the inmates as chose to avail themselves of the privilege. Some of these escaped altogether into the woods, and during several days after rambled wildly over the surrounding country, until caught and again placed under confinement. Others were conveyed to one of the stables, and securely fastened in, under the compulsory care of Robson; while a few, it was believed, whose maladies rendered them either incapable of knowing what was going on, or made them persist in remaining in those melancholy places, which had now become all the world to them, were burnt to death in the flames, which subsequently reached from the blazing furniture to the building, and before

an hour had elapsed from the commencement of this extraordinary attack, enveloped the whole in one sheet of fire.

I have before spoken of that shout of triumph which was heard at Kiddal Hall, when this party of mistaken marauders passed by. It had the effect not only of arousing Squire Lupton and all his household from sleep, but also of inducing that gentleman to arise and endeavour to discover, from his window, the men who had caused it. Nothing could be seen; but he remained a long time to watch, and at length was startled by a red light dimly appearing amongst the hills and woods in the direction of the establishment at Nabbfield. By and by, as it rose higher and higher, within the space of a very few minutes, he felt convinced that some accident or other had happened, and feared lest, possibly, if that house had taken fire, many unhappy lives would be sacrificed during the conflagration. With a degree of rapidity, then, almost in-

conceivable, a considerable force was mustered by him, and hurried off with an old engine, in the direction of the place in question. But so rapidly had the whole scheme been carried into execution, that, by the time of their arrival, all hope of saving any part of the building was gone, and not one single soul, of the many who had done the deed, remained to tell the tale. With an unity of purpose, and a determination to finish their object, equally as well (if well it can be called) as they had begun it, the little army of incendiaries had departed without leaving any trace whereby their route could be pointed out and effectually discovered. Pursuers were soon afterwards despatched in all directions, by the order of Mr. Lupton, but not a single person was apprehended. And although, eventually, a reward of five hundred pounds and a free pardon to any person not actually guilty of the offence, was offered by the Government, in hopes of discovering and bring-

ing the offenders to justice, such was the feeling of every individual concerned, however remotely, in the transaction, that no clue was ever obtained at all likely to lead to their conviction. It was also remarked, as a circumstance particularly worthy of note, that, as far as could be discovered, no attempt at robbery had been made, as the plate and other similar valuables, which the multitude had found, were thrown into the fire along with every other more combustible and less costly article.

CHAPTER XI.

Strange morning doings.—Dr. Rowel returns to view the ruins of his house.—The mysterious chest, and what was in it.

NOTWITHSTANDING the personal violence which, it was to be feared, Doctor Rowel might receive by making his appearance upon the scene of his former crimes, he no sooner was informed of the total destruction of his establishment, and of nearly all the property it contained, as related in the preceding chapter, than he grew half frantic, and immediately declared his resolution to visit the place, be the consequences of his temerity what they might.

Accordingly, in a state of excitement bordering closely on absolute derangement, he set off from York on the following morning, in as private and unobserved a manner as possible. The alertness, however, of the public eye was too great to suffer him wholly to escape; and as he was driven at a rapid pace through the streets of the city, the scornful hisses and execrations of many of the people trebly increased his excitement, by making him feel that most bitter of all feelings in its bitterest form—that he had become despicable and odious in the eyes of his fellow men, and henceforward could no longer hope to dwell amongst them, save as one liable to be continually pointed at, to be shunned, perhaps plainly and openly insulted, without any living creature looking upon him as worthy of receiving pity.

On arriving at his late residence, he beheld only a black ruin in the midst of desolation, with but one solitary object near it which had

survived the general destruction—and that was the old yew-tree under which James Woodruff had passed so many weary years, and which now brought back to the Doctor's eye, suddenly and completely, as might the drawing up of a curtain, a perfect picture of all the past that had led to this sad scene. The tree used to look black before, but now amidst greater blackness and the smoke and ruin of the place it grew in, it looked green; gaily green in the sunshine, as though even it rejoiced and felt glad over the wild justice that had overtaken one guilty of so many crimes as was he who once oppressed the helpless there unopposed. He could have hewn that tree by the roots, for the thoughts it awoke in his mind, and wished it burnt to a pillar of charcoal along with all else that was blasted and calcined about it.

Outside was a throng of gazers, kept off partly by the rural constabulary, and partly by some of the yeomanry of the district. These he hated for their idle curiosity, their prying

into other people's business; and could he have had his will, would have swept the ground clear of them at one stroke of his arm.

Standing on a rising knoll at some little distance, he recognised Squire Lupton and James Woodruff, with his daughter Fanny, gazing over the ruins, and watching with deep interest the progress of the workmen, who were busily employed in recovering from the hot ruins as much of the property on the premises as might have escaped with only partial or no damage. At that sight—

> "each passion dimm'd his face,
> Thrice chang'd with pale ire, envy, and despair."

He would have got out, but he dared not. He felt as though the people would murder him, and cast him into the mouldering heaps of his own house.

Unrecognised in his carriage he was secure; and having drawn up pretty closely to the spot where the last-named little party stood, he

gazed with an intensity of look almost indescribable upon the operations going on amongst the ruins. It was plain that some strange idea had come into his mind; it seemed written in his very features that something might be found there which he would have no man know: a thing for his eyes only, and not to be seen by such men as those.

"But it was a wooden box," thought he again, "and it must be burnt. It could not escape—it is not likely—not possible. No, no; not possible."

And yet, as he comforted himself thus, that possibility was still standing on his brow as plainly as did the mark on Cain's:—the mark that told ineffaceably before heaven and earth his guilt, and warned every man he met to shun him.

Still the workmen worked, and he still gazed. At last they carried out on a hand-barrow a heap of broken furniture, of partly destroyed boxes, and pictures shrivelled like a parched

scroll. Somebody standing by now observed to his neighbour that the face of that man in the carriage was frightful.

"'T is it!—'t is it!" exclaimed the Doctor, fiercely, madly, with hysteric passion, unconscious of what he said and did. At the same time he dashed his fist with the force of a stone through the glass of the window; and having rapidly opened the door, rushed distractedly past all impediments up to the men in question.

This sudden apparition,—for scarcely less even in the midst of daylight did it seem,—so completely astonished and alarmed the people that all those along the course he took fled backwards in fear; while those beyond the scene of action as earnestly pressed forwards to ascertain what was amiss.

Mr. Lupton, James Woodruff, and Fanny, besides many others amongst the crowd, almost instantly recognised the person of the Doctor; while the first-named gentleman as instantly hastened after him in order at once to know

the cause of this wild proceeding, and to prevent, by the interference of his magisterial authority, that mischief which else he feared might soon ensue.

"That 's it !—it 's mine—my own !" cried the Doctor, as he literally threw himself upon a box of considerable dimensions, deeply scorched but not burnt through, which the workmen carried. At the same time he clasped his arms about it as though he would strain to carry it away. The workmen interfered.

"Molest him not !" said Mr. Lupton, and they desisted.

"I swear it is mine !" again exclaimed Mr. Rowel, on hearing the voice of the Squire, "and no man shall open it while I live. I 'm innocent, for they judged me so last night. People will destroy me, if it 's seen. They 'll swear it is *his* body, if they see it."

"What body ?" demanded Mr. Lupton in astonishment.

"Him I m——— no, no ; I did not do that !

Him that died. You know, you know. Everybody over the world knows now! They shall not open it; I'll die first. I defy them all!" And again the insane Doctor endeavoured as though to hide it out of sight with his arms and body.

Mr. Lupton saw in all this something more than exactly appeared upon the surface; and accordingly, both as better for the Doctor himself, and more consistent with his own duty in so remarkable a case, he commanded the constabulary to seize and protect Mr. Rowel back to the carriage from which he had come, and then to convey the mysterious box safely down to Kiddal Hall.

In the execution of these orders, the Doctor made such a desperate resistance, and raved so furiously and incoherently, — repeatedly declaring he should be hanged to-morrow, — that they wanted to murder him, — that the body was not distinguishable, — and that he was haunted by a horrible spectre, — as pretty

clearly evinced that his mind had overshot the firm ground of reason, and had fallen into that same fearful abyss of insanity from which it had been his profession to rescue others; and on the plea of his having fallen into which, he had also so cruelly practised, during many years, upon the unfortunate James Woodruff, his relation.

Great force was required to secure and get him into the carriage; and after that object had been successfully achieved, it was found necessary to bind him strongly with such materials, applicable to the purpose, as chanced to be within reach, before his conveyance in such a vehicle could be considered safe. This having been done, he was, after some delay, eventually driven off to the residence of his brother, on Sherwood forest; — a place to which those friends who had attended him on his trial, considered it most proper, in the present state of affairs, to convey him.

During these transactions the excitement of

the assembled multitude was so great, that, but for the presence of the yeomanry, and the judicious measures adopted by Mr. Lupton, it is to be feared the disorders of the previous night would have been concluded by a yet more horrible catastrophe, in the murder of the Doctor, in open day, upon the memorable site of his own destroyed and now for ever vanished establishment at Nabbfield. This fearful consequence was, however, happily avoided: and all danger being now passed, Mr. James Woodruff and his daughter Fanny again joined company with Mr. Lupton, and followed, with agitated and anxious feelings, in the wake of the great crowd that accompanied the conveyance of the mysterious box to the Squire's own residence.

A short time after their arrival at the Hall, the three above-named individuals, along with one or two other persons, whom Mr. Lupton purposely admitted as witnesses on the occasion, retired into a private room, situate in a

remote part of the building, whither the chest had already been carried, under the care of several officers, and remained present while a heavy lock upon it was broken, and the uplifted lid for the first time displayed, to other eyes than those of Mr. Rowel, a sight so horrible, that even the strongest-nerved man present recoiled with sudden fear, while Fanny uttered a loud shriek of terror, and fell insensible into her father's arms.

Before them, huddled up, to make it fit into its otherwise too short habitation, lay a corpse, the body and limbs of which had undergone dissection, while the head and face, by some process of preparation and injection, yet remained sufficiently perfect to exhibit such a distinct resemblance to what must have been its appearance while alive, as left upon the minds of the spectators not the slightest doubt but that they now assuredly looked upon the remains of the unfortunate Lawyer Skinwell!

By what motive the Doctor could possibly have been actuated in taking the body from its grave could only be conjectured; and the most probable conjecture made upon the occasion was, that he had done so in order so far to destroy all traces of the poison which had been administered to him, as to render any subsequent investigation — presuming such should chance to be made—wholly useless for any purpose of crimination.

But why, having done this, he should still preserve so horrible an object, — and to him, it might be presumed, one so particularly horrible, — few seemed willing to attempt to divine. Perhaps, what Shakespeare has said of sorrow, we may best, in this instance, say of conscious guilt: —

> " 'T was one of those odd things *crime* often shoots
> Out of the mind."

Whatever the cause, however, the fact itself was there most plainly proved; since the re-

mains in the box were subsequently identified, not only by Fanny Woodruff and Mr. Sylvester, the deceased's former clerk, but also by many persons in the village, who had known him intimately when alive.

As no object could now be attained by keeping the body, it was, some time afterwards, placed in its old coffin and re-interred, amidst the marvellings and the pity of numerous rustic spectators.

Another most remarkable circumstance, however, remains to be recorded, in connection with this event, before I conclude this chapter; as it may also serve, with the above, in some degree, to illustrate Doctor Rowel's strange conduct and exclamations touching the chest, in the scene recently described.

Placed immediately beneath the head of the corpse, and forming, in fact, a rest for it, was found a much smaller, though far more antique and curiously ornamented box than the one already described; and which, event-

ually, proved to be the identical one wherein the title-deeds of the estate of the Woodruffs of Charnwood had been kept during many generations. On being opened, it was found still to contain them precisely in the same state in which Mr. Rowel had so many years ago possessed himself of them, after securing the person of their legitimate owner. The effects of Mr. Skinwell's conduct in resisting the Doctor's solicitations to co-operate dishonestly with him in altering or destroying those writings, (as previously recorded,) now became apparent; and deep, indeed, was the regret of all, that through such conduct he had, in all human probability, come to such a frightful end.

Mr. Woodruff having then taken them again into his own custody, all matters connected with the affair were settled in the best manner circumstances would allow; and after a brief interval from the period now spoken of, he and his daughter set out on their first journey,

again to behold and to take possession of their hereditary home.

On their arrival, however, they found it inhabited, under rent of Doctor Rowel, by tenants whom the reader will feel no less surprised than was Fanny to find there.

CHAPTER XII.

A meeting, and a parting. Being one of the most agreeable, pathetic, and loving chapters to be found in this great history.

No long period of observation was required after Colin's arrival at Mr. Calvert's, to enable him to discover that deep anxiety, and care, and watchfulness, now reigned throughout that house touching her, his own beloved, who so lately was as its life-spring and delight. The absence of joy, if not the positive presence of melancholy, was visible in every countenance. The voices that spoke, spoke in a lower tone than formerly; while those of Mr. and Mrs. Calvert were seldom heard

at all. The blinds of the windows seemed to be permanently kept more than usually low; —unconsciously, perhaps, on the part of the inmates of the place; but, then, that little circumstance agreed with the general tone of their feelings, and so it became as it were natural. He also observed, that though it was that precise time of day when a canary bird that hung in the sitting-room usually sang so gladly as to make itself heard nearly over the whole house, the singing bird was now mute. A piece of white muslin that had been thrown over his cage many hours ago to keep off the sun, had ever since been forgotten. It kept him silent; yet strange enough, nobody appeared to miss his singing, nor to think a moment of the little ruffled and discontented heap of living music that fretted in gloomy silence beneath.

At length, Jane, who, he had previously been informed, had lately confined herself almost wholly to her own chamber, was introduced by her sister; the latter having,

with careful consideration, already cautiously communicated to her the fact of the arrival of her brother Roger, and of Colin.

"How changed!" thought Colin as his spirit absolutely shrank at the first sight of her. "How like a creature whose heart is gone, — all whose ties to the world are rapidly loosening, and who soon must be caught back to the earth, or the chance will be lost for ever." In her face was written, as all might read, that *the past* was all of a pleasant existence she should ever look upon.

Yet when she saw him,—though all the family was around,—though all eyes were upon her,—though the father looked solemn, and the mother half chidingly; she at once flew towards him with the joy of a lark upwards. For what was all the world besides, — its thoughts, and sayings, and opinions, — what were they now to her? Nature was nature in her bosom,—pure, frank, and virtuous; and her feelings those which

Heaven had planted there for the wisest, the best, and the happiest purposes.

At this affecting sight her mother sobbed aloud; Mr. Calvert turned away, and pressed the tears back into his eyes in silence. Her sister seized her hands in hers, and as she pressed them with a loving pressure entreated her to be composed. Her elder brother sat mute, looking seriously on the floor; while honest Roger, himself, with the tears bursting from his eyes, struck his hand upon the table, in a sudden agony of goodwill, and exclaimed,

"She *shall* have him, I say!"

The plainness and oddity of this declaration contrasted so comically with the occasion upon which it was made, that scarcely a single person present could forbear smiling; while, certain it is, that every one, not excepting even the most obstinately opposed to that event, felt a sudden conviction that Roger's words would somehow or other eventually come true.

But as suddenly as that conviction flashed across the mind, so, with respect to Mr. and Mrs. Calvert, did it as suddenly again cease. For though, during some few brief moments of promise which the temporary excitement of their feelings had produced, they felt half inclined to relent, and to endeavour to make the best of those circumstances which it seemed in vain any longer to oppose; yet, as the cause of that sudden conversion lost its temporary influence, they fell back upon former old objections with almost increased prejudice; just as in many other cases people will adopt a new doctrine for awhile, but when the particular circumstances that caused them to do so are removed, will as surely return with additional liking to their old and familiar opinions.

Long and curiously did these two afterwards discuss the matter, and how finally it should be settled; while Colin and Jane, with a far less expenditure of sage remarks

and clever suggestions, were rapidly settling it in good earnest without any discussion at all. There were no "pros" and "cons" with them; no question about conventional proprieties; nor any considerations as to what the world might, or might not think, in reference to them. Enough for Jane that Colin was, in his own person and mind, all that a young man should be, to be loveable and deserving of love; and for Colin, that Jane seemed to merit more than the utmost of what it was possibly in his power to bestow.

While the last named pair regarded the question as altogether one of the heart, and into which no other conceivable interest should be allowed to intrude, the parents of Jane held it as totally a question of the head, or imagined right or wrong, and of propriety or impropriety, so far as the maintenance or the sacrifice of their own peculiar opinions might possibly be involved. But inasmuch as even the worst philosopher may venture most safely

to back the heart against the head in any contention of the kind here spoken of, the reader will not feel surprised to learn that Colin and Jane would certainly have triumphed, had it not unluckily happened that some time before their forces could be brought perfectly to bear, Mr. Calvert one day sent a message to Colin, requesting his company in the former gentleman's study, and on his appearance delivered to him the following very disheartening and painful speech:—

"After what has occurred, Mr. Clink, since your return to town, and from the scene it was our painful fortune to witness between you and my daughter on your arrival here, I feel a firm conviction, which every day serves to strengthen, that the time has arrived when it becomes my duty as a father to come to some positive and decisive determination in this matter. Much as I respect Mr. Lupton, for notwithstanding his deep indiscretions, upon which it is not my duty to pronounce any

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judgment, I yet know him to be in many respects most highly deserving of esteem; and worthy and deserving a young man as I certainly think you yourself to be, yet there are causes which from the first made me fearful, when I found your preference for Jane, that a continued acquaintance between you could not lead to any happiness. I shall not allude to those causes in any more direct manner, for you probably can judge sufficiently what I mean, without the necessity for any more explicit statement."

Poor Colin here blushed crimson and bowed his head down, as Mr. Calvert proceeded:—

"But with my habits of thinking, and the principles I have always cherished from my boyhood, it would be inconsistent with my usual practice, were I to hold those causes as too light to be regarded as an obstacle to your ultimate views. To me they are of every importance: I might more properly call them insurmountable difficulties. And

though I am perfectly aware that such matters are too frequently regarded with careless, and, as I take it, with criminal indifference, yet I hold them as so far affecting in themselves the moral principles of society, as so far contrary to the dictates of religion, and to the obligations due to the more correct portions of the community, that I feel, painful and bitter as is the task, I feel compelled thus plainly and distinctly to declare my sentiments to you in the hope that, after having so done, nothing more will be required in order to assure you of the course which it is most necessary for me to wish you at once and immediately to adopt."

"Sir!" said Colin, as his heart seemed to swell into his throat and almost prevent him speaking, "I cannot, sir, but respect your motives, and feel more deeply how much *I* shall lose if I am under the necessity of quitting this house and seeing those who are in it no more. I know what your objections are,—

they are not to be removed, and are irremediable. I am what I am; and for myself I have no apology to offer,—no excuse to make."

He would have spoken more, but at that moment he could not.

"Stay!" observed Mr. Calvert, "do not mistake me. It is your misfortune, not your crime: and for misfortune which no power of yours could ever remedy, apology or excuse can never be demanded. It was my hope some time ago that Jane and yourself might possibly dissolve this acquaintance yourselves, when my sentiments and those of her mother and family were made known to you both; and thus render such an explanation as the present needless. But I have been mistaken: and in permitting that farther communication which I foolishly hoped would terminate itself, we have only fastened the bands more tightly, and increased the probabilities of pain on that after-separation, which, difficult as the words are to me to speak, I still am compelled to say,

must be effected. We cannot go on thus any longer. Even now it is a question of every importance to you both. To my poor dear daughter it may soon become a question of life or death. The possibility of such a result must be averted. The step must be taken in time. Though the blow be painful it must be struck. Nevertheless, when you are gone, carry with you the assurance that I still continue, along with all my family, to think honourably of you, — to remember your worthiness, — to look with melancholy pleasure upon the time when we could entertain you personally under our roof, —and to regret to the last hour of our lives that so unhappy an ending should have come to the young affection of one whom it would have been our delight, if possible, to have blessed with the good creature — for such my Jane is — the good and worthy creature he had sought."

So saying, Mr. Calvert pressed Colin's hand energetically during several minutes.

"Bless you, my friend!" added he, as he gazed upon the heart-broken youth beside him, —"Bless you!—Even now I cannot part with you without betraying more than becomes me as a father in such a case."

And as he falteringly uttered these words, his eyes confirmed them with nature's purest token of severed friendship.

"Your worthiness," at length replied Colin, "makes me, sir, lost what to say. Had you treated me harshly I could have replied; but as it is, I feel still the more bound by the very efforts made to shake me off. If you will have it so, sir, I know not how to oppose: though certainly it is impossible for me ever to comply. Not by that, that I mean to say the wishes of so worthy a man shall not be carried out as far as Heaven will give me power to do it: but though *I* go away never to return more, believe me, sir, my heart will be left with those I leave,—I shall do my best to forget where I am,—to inhabit this place still in imagination,

and live out my life at least with the memory of her whom I am forbidden to know in any other manner."

"Endeavour to be reconciled," observed Mr. Calvert; "and remember that even the most favoured cannot say that this world was made for happiness."

"No, indeed!" exclaimed Colin bitterly,—"it is not indeed."

"I am afraid," rejoined his worthy friend, "that on neither side shall we ever cease to feel pain on this subject; but it will be our duty to bow with humility before those decrees which we cannot escape, and to endeavour to persuade ourselves that everything may possibly be after all for the best."

"It cannot, sir," replied Colin in the agony of his spirit; "it can never be for the best that we should be separated for ever! It is impossible. For however well it may be for others, to us it can be nothing but inevitable misery."

"Do not speak thus, my young friend," answered Mr. Calvert; "I am myself an old man, and have many times found in the course of a long and not uneventful life, that out of those circumstances which at the time of their occurrence promised nothing but unhappiness, the unseen agency of Providence not unfrequently deduced consequences the most important to our future welfare. Just as, on the contrary, we often find that the fairest promise of happiness ends in the least practical result; and at the bottom of the sweetest cup we find the bitterest dregs."

Colin was about to reply, but Mr. Calvert waved his hand as significant that he would add a few more words.

"Who knows," he asked, "but that under this, to you, most dire of disappointments may lie hidden the cause of all your future happiness? Unseen, it doubtless is to you now, and difficult perhaps of being even imagined. But inasmuch as no man can foresee what is in store

for him, nor predicate from things present of things to come, it is at once the wisest way and the most in accordance with our faith and dependence upon Providence, to make ourselves willing to accept as the best possible good, with reference to our future welfare, those fatalities of life which no endeavours of ours can possibly avert. Be comforted; and strive both to forget the past and to believe the present and the future more rife with satisfaction than, under the influence of your existing excitement of feeling, they else might appear.

"And now, having, as I hope, settled this matter in the best manner it will allow of, let me add one more observation, and I have done. Under every possible view of the case, and considering that no conceivable good could come of a formal parting, I must beg of you to regard your interview, this morning, with Jane as *the last*. It is better that you do not see each other again."

"Oh no, sir, no!" exclaimed Colin, "you

cannot mean that. It is impossible. When I left her but now to come to you, I had not half told her what I intended to say, and I promised to be back again as soon as I had seen you. She begged of me not to be long, because with all her grief she could not bear to be alone. I must go, sir; if it be only to say one good-b'ye,—just one,—and no more!"

"Better not," faltered Mr. Calvert, half between a smile and a tear.

"Yes, sir,—yes,—you will not deny us that."

Mr. Calvert's lips quivered, but he said nothing.

"I am made unhappy for ever, now!" added Colin.

After a pause Mr. Calvert replied, "Then you must see her in my presence, if at all."

"Anywhere!" exclaimed our hero gladly; "but let me see her again."

Jane was now sent for. When she entered

the room, Colin could no longer restrain himself. The sight of her made him burst into tears.

"Jane, my girl," began the father as he took her hand, and led her gently beside his own chair; "I hope you will sustain yourself for a few moments, while I simply explain to you that Mr. Clink and I have had some conversation upon the same subject as that upon which your mother has already spoken to you. The matter is now finally settled. But Mr. Clink wished, before he went, to bid you a good-b'ye for the last time; as you part friends with him, the same as, from my heart, I can say *I* do; and not for myself alone, but in the name of all the family."

Jane could not speak, but her pretty throat swelled like that of a nightingale that dies, as poor Keates describes it, "*heart-stifled* in its dell."

"Father!" at length she whispered, "it is not — is not — *true!*"

Mr. Calvert remained fixed and mute as a statue.

"It cannot be true!" continued Jane; "you would never—never make me so miserable! I do not believe it — I cannot!"

At length her father spoke.

"My dear girl," said he, with a solemnity which he could not help, and of which he was not himself conscious; "you *must* endeavour to be resigned. As you love me, let me beg of you to calm yourself, and endeavour to seek in prayer to Heaven that comfort which I never thought to see a child of mine so much in need of. You want peace of mind, child."

"I *do*, father!" she exclaimed, wringing her hands; "no poor soul more than I."

Another pause ensued here, during which Colin clasped Jane's other hand, as though when that one grapple was over, the world would be lost, and he should sink for ever. His eyes were on her face, but he could not see.

"And now," added Mr. Calvert, half-chokingly; "do not prolong this scene. We can do no more. Bid each other a loving good-b'ye, and be that kiss the last."

"I cannot!" exclaimed Jane, hysterically; "I *cannot!* Father! I love him, and *shall* love him everlastingly. You will not part us, I know. He will never leave me — never! Oh no! no, no, no!"

And poor Jane fell into a fearful convulsion, that made all cheeks pale and eyes wet for mere pity at her trouble.

This event brought others of the family into the room, and amongst them Colin's best friend, Roger. No sooner did he see what had happened, than his spirit and his feelings were at once aroused.

"I tell you," he exclaimed passionately, though without addressing any one in particular,—"I tell you, you will kill the girl if you go on in this way with her!"

And then Jane was carried away and placed

on her pretty white bed, and tended carefully by her mother and her sister and her waiting-maids, until life came reluctantly back again, and she waked once more into the consciousness of misery.

"Is he gone, mother?" she demanded in the first faint tones that conscious animation supplied to the tongue; "is he gone?"

"No, my dear, he is not gone; nor is he going yet," replied Mrs. Calvert.

"That's right!—that's right!" she exclaimed. And then, as she looked her parent earnestly in the face, she asked—"Mother! do you remember how *you* ever loved my father?"

That little simple appeal was irresistible, as a world of tears soon testified.

After that Jane grew calmer, and sat up with her mother and sister to catch the air from an opened window that looked through a nest of vine leaves into the garden.

Meantime Roger Calvert, his father, and Colin, had further conversation below stairs,

which ended in producing a determination on the part of Colin and his friend of great interest as well as importance in our history, but which will be farther explained in another chapter.

CHAPTER XIII.

Reveals various curious particulars; of which the mysterious disappearance of Jane is not the least.

In the desperate state of things implied by the proceedings last recorded, it will not be marvelled at that measures equally desperate should have been projected by Colin in conjunction with his friend Roger; though eminently calculated, provided they could but be carried out, to bring him that final satisfaction which it appeared impossible for him to attain through any other more moderate course.

Roger's general conduct towards Colin, throughout the affair, had inspired the latter with every confidence in him, and the certainty of being able to command his services in any

enterprise which had the happiness of Jane and himself for its object. Nothing indeed but that confidence could possibly have induced Colin to take the earliest opportunity that offered, after the scenes described in the preceding chapter, to draw Mr. Roger Calvert into an unobserved part of the house, and propose to him that they should settle the matter at once and for ever in a manner already suggested,—that is, through the medium of an elopement during the night. Colin argued that it was now sufficiently evident he had no chance of succeeding unless by resorting to that gentle violence just alluded to. He contended that Mr. and Mrs. Calvert would never give way without it,—that if once done it would afford them a capital excuse for reconciling themselves to the match, when such reconciliation had become a matter of necessity, without involving them in any of that unpleasant compromise of principle, as they supposed it, which at present constituted the great obstacle to their union.

He even ventured to suggest, that very possibly if they *could* be made aware of his projected attempt, they would secretly feel inclined to connive at it,—seeing that at least Jane's happiness would be for ever destroyed, if even her very life were not sacrificed, were not something done to avert those consequences of parental opposition which now seemed to hang over them. As for himself — without her, happiness for him in any situation, or under any circumstances, was totally out of the question. He felt assured of the impossibility of his living other than a miserable life, and dying a death at last which disappointment and misfortune had rendered welcome. He concluded by beseeching his friend, as he knew his honourable intentions, as he recognised the justice of his suit, and felt at once for his sister's unhappiness and his own, to give him his support and assistance in carrying out such a project.

" I should decidedly say," replied Roger,

" you have good cause for eloping under the circumstances — that is, supposing Jane herself has no objection; and I assure you it is what I myself should do in the same situation."

Thus supported, Colin entered on his design with increased alacrity and spirit; but as his final leave of Jane was now understood to have been taken, he had no ready means of communicating with her upon the subject, except through the agency of her brother Roger. He, however, very readily undertook the task of informing his sister of the design, as he considered it absolutely scandalous that the happiness of two young people's lives should be utterly blighted simply because her parents entertained notions which, however conscientious, by no means (in his opinion) could justify for a moment their perseverance in measures of so important and violent a character.

It was, therefore, agreed between them, that, in order the more successfully to carry on their

plan, Colin should that night take a respectful leave of the family under the impression, on their parts, of never seeing him again; but that, instead of quitting London, he should only retire to some hotel, or to a friend's house, where he could remain until such time as matters were arranged for his and Jane's departure together. This accordingly he did, quitting Mr. Calvert's house not without considerable grief on the part of all who dwelt beneath the roof, except Roger himself, though, on Colin's own part, with such a poor, miserable exhibition of sorrow, considering the unfortunate situation in which he was placed, that the good Calverts were quite astonished thereat, and, after he was gone, began very strongly to suspect that, after all, there was not half the feeling and excellence in him they had previously been led to believe. He had not produced even a single tear on the occasion; while Mrs. Calvert spoke almost positively to a certain something like a smile

lurking about his mouth, which she had observed at the very moment when her husband had so feelingly remarked to him that, while he wished him well on earth, perhaps the next time they met it would be in heaven. Yet the hard-hearted young man did not seem so much as to think of crying even at that, but actually took it as coolly as though he were going to meet them all again in the course of two or three days from that identical night. These things certainly had a strange look, though they might possibly be the result, not so much of indifference, as of an heroic determination, on his part, to disguise his sorrows until the painful trial was over. Roger was appealed to for judgment in the case, but he professed to have no power over other men's bosoms, nor ability in discovering the profundities of their springs of action. But the truth of the matter was, that while Roger enjoyed excellent reasons within himself for keeping the secret, he also felt mate-

rially disinclined for conversation. The departure of his friend had put a seal upon his tongue; while it had likewise rendered him uncommonly anxious to see how his sister Jane bore it, and to offer her such consolation under the circumstances as might chance to lie in his power.

When, at length, Roger went to see her, he found her sitting alone, as she had particularly begged to be left, looking more like a spirit in the twilight than an embodied creature.

"Jane!" said he, as he entered the room and advanced towards her. She started astonished—almost affrighted. That one word had come upon her like a thunder-clap. It had awakened her from a reverie or a dream—suddenly snatched her, as it were, from a world of her own sad imagination back to the still sadder world of nature about her.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "who is it?"

"Only I," replied Roger. "Dry your eyes directly, there's a good girl. I have something

to tell you that I hope will make you glad. I told you before that you should have him, after all."

"Oh—" cried Jane clasping her hands, "has my father——"

"No, no; not that," rejoined her brother; "but something that will do quite as well. Only you must speak low and let nobody hear, or else we shall spoil the whole business. Colin and I have settled it altogether between us. You *must* do it, you know, for your own sake as well as his, and do not hesitate a moment about it. I'll tell you plainly what it is,—you must give your consent for Colin to run away with you."

Jane shook her head.

"You *must*," repeated Roger; "there is no other mode of managing it: *I* will go with you, and we will all three fly down to Mr. Woodruff's house, where we will have a parson to marry you directly, so as to make the matter safe; and then father and mother, and every-

body else may make the best of the matter they can!"

"Do not play with me," said Jane; "I cannot indeed bear it now!"

"I never was more in earnest in my life!" exclaimed Roger, emphatically; "I tell you it is all settled, and you *must* do it, whether you like it or not. I won't see your happiness sacrificed for the want of a little spirit on your part when it is so much required. Look here—"

And Roger drew forth a letter which Colin had hastily indited before taking his leave, and confided to him to deliver to his sister at the earliest opportunity.

"Here," he continued, "is a note from Colin upon the subject, which I dare say you will not refuse to read."

"It is too dark," answered Jane; "besides I dare not. What *would* they all think of me if I were to listen to such a proposal as this?"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Roger; "they

would think a great deal better of you after it was all over, than ever they could think of themselves, if they should have to put up for you a tablet in the church, with an inscription that you had died of disappointment brought on by their own rigour. Here, take it, and I will fetch you a lamp to read by."

Jane took the letter, and her brother hastened out to fulfil his intention.

The moment he was gone, Jane rose with uncommon alacrity and hastened to the window. Yes, there was yet light enough to make most of it out, although she thought it dark not a minute ago. The letter said a hundred sweet and happy things, such as she felt certain no man had ever said before; such as even *he* had not ever thought of saying on any other occasion. It promised as certain an easy reconcilement with all parties; it told her he was sure of it, and bade her feel no fear. It visioned a world of delight for the future, and represented its writer as lost utterly, if she

would not listen to her brother's advice and consent to act upon it. And then it concluded with more love signified in half a dozen little words than anybody else, she believed, could express in half a volume.

When Roger returned, which he did speedily, with a lamp, "I do not want it," observed Jane, blushing to the forehead to be thus seen in the light, though it was only by her brother and best friend.

"What! won't you read it?" demanded he.

"It was light enough at the window," faltered Jane.

"That's right!" exclaimed Roger; "I'll kiss you for that."

And so saying, he caught his sister in his arms, and told her how good a girl she was for taking advice; at the same time promising not only to steer her safely through, but to ensure the good will of her parents as early after the business was concluded as possible.

But Jane still held out, and protested she

dared not do it. And though her brother brought all his powers of oratory to bear in the endeavour to extort a promise from her, she persisted in her refusal, and at length told him it was quite useless to say anything more to her upon the subject.

Roger went away both puzzled and mortified; but within a few days afterwards it was remarked by all the family that Jane seemed quite astonishingly recovered from her melancholy. There was really a surprising difference in her manners; and hope began to be confidently entertained that in the course of a short time longer, she would have perfectly recovered her painful disappointment, and become once again that same pleasant creature she was before her eyes met those of Colin, but which almost ever since she had so unhappily ceased to be. However, at the very time when everybody expected and prognosticated that this desirable consummation would be effected, at that precise period when all happy eyes were

again to be turned upon her with renewed gladness, then it was discovered, to everybody's amazement, that she was missing; Roger too had disappeared in a manner equally mysterious; nor was *Jane Calvert* ever found again. A fact more remarkable than all.

CHAPTER XIV.

A scene in a lady's chamber. — Before the Elopement, and after it.—Arrival at Charnwood, and who was found there.

When our friend, Roger, first observed the change in his sister's spirits more particularly alluded to above, he regarded it as an omen so much more to be relied upon for its real significance than any words, that thereupon he wrote to Colin at the place where he was waiting in expectation, — stating the circumstances that had occurred, at full length; and insinuating that if Colin felt inclined to adopt a bold course and prepare everything in readiness for the expedition, he would engage, without

any further delay, to persuade his sister to fly with them about day-break on a certain morning which he named. Mr. Clink, as may well be imagined, most eagerly seized upon the opportunity. His heart was on fire. Now was everything to be risked, and everything to be won. After the receipt of that letter he could not sleep nor rest until the arrival of the eventful morning.

Roger had already contrived to get Jane's maid into his favour, and to her was to be confided the duty of awakening her mistress and communicating to her the first intelligence of the arrival of a carriage at the gate; while, with his own hand, during the previous night, he not only secured all the members of the family fast in their rooms, by tying the doors outside, but also crippled the bell-wires in a manner so effectually, that an alarm of the servants by those means was rendered impossible.

At the latest possible hour he communicated

to his sister the fact that everything was in readiness, and that Colin would be near the house before sunrise on the following morning to set off with her and himself on their journey to the house of Mr. Woodruff; that gentleman having already been communicated with on the subject, and his consent obtained;—partly, because he could refuse nothing to Colin, and partly, because his own daughter had used her influence in persuading him there could not possibly be any harm in affording such a refuge to the fugitives. This announcement, together with the prospect it held out to her, made Jane tremble all over and look full of fears; but Roger would not allow her to protest anything against it, as he stopped her as the first words escaped her lips, with the remark that nothing could possibly be said about it now,—the time was come—the thing settled—all arrangements made,—and she could not now do anything but prepare herself for compliance at the perilous moment when she

should be summoned in the morning. So saying, he bade her good night, with an additional declaration that he could not hear a word of denial.

If the truth were told, I should tell how all that night poor Jane's heart throbbed incessantly, and sometimes, in correspondence with her thoughts, leaped suddenly as if it would go out of its place. I should tell how she never slept a single wink; — how earnestly she said her prayers, and how long! How, after many hesitations, and at last with many tears, she eventually put her trembling hand to the reluctant, yet loving, task of putting up such trinkets and jewellery as could not be dispensed with, — while her maid, as busy and as pleased as a summer bee, employed herself in a similar task with her dresses. And then, when all was over, how she stood silent awhile, looking on those places and around that room, which to-morrow her mother should find empty, and which now for the last time beheld

her who had tenanted and adorned it from her childhood. That glass might never look upon her face again, which had seen her beauty grow up from pretty girlishness to perfect womanhood. That window would never more have the same eyes through it that had become familiar there — nor those leaves any more be put aside by the fingers that had so often saved them unbruised, when the little casement was closed for the night. I should tell how, as these and similar thoughts passed rapidly through her mind, the tears stole silently down her cheeks until she sank upon her chair, and declared, while she did so, that she should never have the heart to go !

But the heart has a way of its own sometimes, and sudden courage on occasion which it has not resolutions to contemplate beforehand. So, after the night had worn away, and when the time came for flight,— before yet the stars were gone, or any light more than a first dim gleam on a black ground, was seen in the

east,—she plucked up resolution to be firm, but lost it again immediately, for the sound of a carriage wheels — *the* carriage that was to whirl her away from her old home to a new life in a new place—faintly but distinctly came upon her ear.

"'Tis he!" she exclaimed.

"Truly, ma'am, I hope so," replied the maid, "for I want to see you safe off and happy."

"Hush!" said Jane, in a whisper; "listen, listen!"

In the next minute her brother Roger gently tapped at the door. It was true. She must go, and no delay be made—not a moment's waiting. And go she did; but in such a way, that when half an hour after she found herself sitting beside her maid, with Roger and Colin opposite, and being driven at a tremendous pace on the north road, out of the metropolis, she could not remember how she had got down stairs, or walked to the carriage, or who had helped her,

or whether she had done so without any assistance at all. But there she was, and of little else did she seem conscious. With her lover matters were considerably different. Full of self-possession, and elated in the highest degree, he felt then as though but one idea existed to him in the world, and that one which may best be expressed in the exclamation of one of Moore's angels—

> " 'Tis done, 'tis done !
> The gate is passed, and heaven is won !"

Before we proceed to inquire how the fugitives sped after their arrival at the end of their journey, it may interest the reader to be informed, that they very narrowly escaped detection and pursuit, in consequence of an odd accident, that happened through their very precautions to be safe; and which, had it unfortunately occurred some hour or two earlier, would inevitably have frustrated their design.

Very early in the morning, and before the

family had arisen, the house-dogs began barking most furiously, which, from some unknown cause, rang an alarm from cellar to garret, of the whole establishment. Both servants and master were soon in motion, anxious to discover the cause of this unusual hurly-burly. The latter looked first out of his window; but discovering nothing, then attempted to ring his bell; whereupon the wire dropped down into his hands, as it had very cleverly been unhooked by his son Roger, from the crank outside, in preparation for any contingency of the kind which now arose. He next tried his door, and was still more astonished to find it secured outside, so that all egress was, for the present, prevented. While this was going on, various others of the household were going through similar operations, and discovering themselves placed in similar predicaments until, at length, it became generally believed throughout the house, that a gang of thieves must have entered it, and converted the place into a temporary prison,

in order the better to effect their nefarious designs.

When, however, fortune had so far favoured them as to allow of an escape, a search was instantly instituted; but still the cause of the disturbance remained as unexplained as before.

By the time that every person under the roof had arisen and assembled, under feelings of the most anxious inquiry, it was remarked by one or two of the more sagacious and reflecting amongst them, that neither Miss Jane nor Mr. Roger appeared to have been aroused by the same noise, which had put themselves into such an extraordinary consternation. This fact appeared unaccountable, for the rooms of both commanded as audible hearing of any external commotion as any rooms on the premises. Some of them cleverly imagined that the pair alluded to must have slept uncommonly sound, and assigned as good reason for that belief, the fact of Jane's previous ill health, and Roger's well known activity in all sorts of laborious ex-

ercises; but while these last mentioned were speculating upon probabilities, Mr. Calvert himself had hastened off to Roger's room, and his eldest daughter to that of Jane, in order to ascertain from those two individuals themselves the actual and *bonâ fide* state of the case. What was their amazement to find both nests cold, and the birds flown! Mr. Calvert felt so amazed at this discovery, that he was obliged to sit down on the stairs a few minutes in order to recover himself; while his daughter, with the natural feeling and action of a woman so circumstanced, flew back again, the moment she discovered the deficiency alluded to, screaming all the way she went, that Jane had been stolen away.

A good guess at the real truth instantly flashed across the mind of every one present. A conspiracy, to which nobody but themselves were privy, had evidently been entered into and executed by Jane and Colin, aided by Roger, and all agreed, in their own minds,

that, instead of ever seeing *Jane* again, they should be, somehow or other, introduced to Mrs. Colin Clink.

Mr. Calvert, at first, took the thing in uncommon dudgeon, and ordered his horses out to pursue the flying trio, but, by the time every saddle and harness were got ready, it luckily chanced to be discovered that nobody knew whether to prefer the east, west, north, or south quarters, in the proposed search after them. Not the remotest clue could be obtained as to which road they had taken. Probabilities, however, being in favour of Kiddal Hall, Mr. Calvert and his son very shortly afterwards set out together on a hurried expedition to that residence, in hopes of arriving there and learning tidings of the runaways, in time to prevent that marriage which, under his present feelings, Mr. Calvert felt determined never to sanction, in any shape.

In the mean time Colin and his friend were making the best use of their time, by a

series of civil forced marches along the road, and beguiling the hours thus occupied, by forming all sorts of ludicrous conjectures as to the progress of events at the house from which they had so ably effected their escape; thus endeavouring to rally Jane's spirits.

It was in the course of the following day that our little party had the pleasure of beholding the walls within which they were to be made secure of future happiness; secure, at least, so far as mutual affection, well tried, and an earnest heart for each other's welfare, may be considered capable of effecting that end. Thus felt Colin and his pretty companion, while Roger regarded his first view of the house with remarkable interest, since it also contained her who was everything to him, and with whom it had long since been decided he should eventually join his fortunes, for better and for worse.

Mr. Woodruff's residence was situated in one of the pleasantest portions of Leicestershire.

It was one of those old, large, and substantial brick buildings, so characteristic of a particular period of our domestic architecture, but which can scarcely be better described, with their ornamental brickwork, cornices, and mouldings, than by simply saying they convey an idea of comfort, stability, and even of substantial well-doing, on the part of the occupant, which is in vain sought for in any other class of either old or modern erections. Its grounds were full of old and stately trees, which almost seemed to speak their own dignity, and declare to the passer-by, that beneath their branches had flourished some generations of the true old English gentleman.

To this place were they most heartily welcomed by Mr. Woodruff and his daughter, on their arrival.

It was on this occasion Colin learned, to his astonishment, from the lips of Fanny,

that her father and herself, on paying their first visit of inspection to their newly-recovered property, found it occupied by the family of that identical Miss Wintlebury whom he and she had so strangely met in London, and of whom they both had reason to think so well. At the mention of that name, Colin blushed so deeply that Jane felt sudden misgivings as to his perfect fidelity, and, in a manner half joke, half earnest, charged him with deception, either towards herself, or, perhaps, to some now far less happy creature; an observation to which Colin could not in any manner so well reply as by giving a brief statement of that short story respecting Miss Wintlebury, with which the reader is already acquainted, and which he did in a manner at once so frank, open, and considerate, as instantly raised his general character very highly in Jane's esteem. His own goodness of heart could not but

shine through his narrative, tinging even his errors, if such there were, with that warm feeling of generosity as rendered them, if not amiable, at least certainly not criminal.

Respecting Miss Wintlebury herself, Colin was happy to be informed that she had materially improved in health; since, not only her residence in the country, but likewise the widely altered circumstances in which her father had placed her, assisted to throw in her way almost every possible advantage that one in her situation could require. She still remembered Colin's conduct with the most grateful feelings, and testified them by entertaining his friends, Fanny and her father, in the best manner their house could afford. Besides which, on Mr. Wintlebury being farther informed of the particulars of their story in connexion with Doctor Rowel, of which already he had heard much from common fame, he volunteered at once to quit the premises he occupied and give Mr.

Woodruff as early possession of his own again as circumstances rendered possible.

Accordingly, a short time afterwards he left it, and took a farm hard by; after which the house and gardens were re-arranged in accordance with the views of the proprietor, and he and his daughter entered upon its enjoyment.

CHAPTER XV.

A wedding, a last interview, and a death.—Mrs. Lupton's funeral.

It was a proud morning, a glorious day for Colin, when, with Jane Calvert on his arm, he hastened to the little rural church which stood hard by Mr. Woodruff's residence, there to pronounce openly what he had long felt in his heart,—the sacred promise to love and cherish till death, in sickness and in health, through weal and woe, the beautiful and good creature beside him. Singularly enough, the bride was accompanied by the two young ladies who, on one hand or the other, might each have been expected to fill her place.

Fanny Woodruff and Harriet Wintlebury officiated as bridesmaids; one who had loved him, and one whom he had loved. By both, however, was his marriage with another looked upon with pleasure, since the altered circumstances under which both were now placed, rendered envy or jealousy incapable of finding a place in either breast.

The marriage ceremony was not yet wholly over,—the priest had just uttered the solemn injunction, "Those whom Heaven hath joined together let no man put asunder,"—when a stir was heard at the church door, and Mr. Calvert and his son, in a state of great excitement, hurried in. The former rushed towards the altar, and suddenly seizing his daughter Jane by the arm, exclaimed,

"I forbid the marriage!"

The priest waved his hand as signifying him to draw back, and pronounced before all present that Colin and Jane were man and wife together, concluding with that blessing which

so beautifully finishes the Church ceremony on these occasions.

As the party retired in confusion and pain, Mr. Calvert approached them, and taking the newly-made wife's hand,—

"Jane!" said he, "as you are my daughter, I never expected this. However, I will not reproach you now. The thing is done, and cannot now be undone. It is not for me to put asunder whom God hath joined together: I *must* make the best of it in my power, and therefore, seeing there is no remedy, let me join in the blessing that has been pronounced, and ask of Heaven *that ye may so live in this life, that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting.*"

At these words and this conduct, poor Jane burst into tears and wept bitterly as she clung round her father's neck; while Colin stood by, deeply affected both by the distress of his wife, and the manner in which, at this last scene of all, Mr. Calvert had conducted himself.

Roger complimented his father and brother in a good-humoured manner upon their being too late; and declared the uncommon gratification with which he found them thus disappointed: while Fanny and Miss Wintlebury could not refrain expressing in their countenances, if not in words, the sincerity with which they joined in the young man's sentiments.

On the return of the whole party to the residence of Mr. Woodruff, Jane's father informed them how he had, in the first instance, directed his steps to Kiddal Hall, and thence to the place where he now was, in hopes of arriving in time to prevent a marriage in which he did not, at that time, acquiesce: and the more particularly did he feel objections upon the occasion, as he found on his arrival at the Hall that his old acquaintance and friend, Mrs. Lupton, was in a state of health that promised nothing less than a speedy dissolution. Under those circumstances, he had felt anxious at least to defer for awhile, if he could not

finally prevent, the ceremony which had that morning taken place. These intentions, however, being now altogether frustrated, nothing remained but to endeavour to reconcile matters finally with all parties interested therein, in the best manner of which they were susceptible; and, in order to effect this, Mr. Calvert deemed it needful that the newly-married pair should return with him to Kiddal, — where, indeed, on receiving the intelligence of the marriage, Mrs. Lupton afterwards most strongly invited them. This step he considered the more advisable, because in case of the unfortunate lady of that house desiring to see them before her death, their immediate presence on the spot would prevent the otherwise possible contingency of her dying wishes being disappointed.

Accordingly, at an early and convenient period they set out; and, on their arrival at Kiddal, were welcomed by the Squire with a degree of satisfaction scarcely to be expressed sufficiently. A portion of the house was, for

the present, devoted entirely to their use; and, for awhile, a degree of unmixed happiness would have reigned throughout that building so unaccustomed to such scenes, but for the situation of Mrs. Lupton, who now rapidly sunk under an accumulation of anxieties and grief, with part of which the reader is already acquainted, but the great and unsustainable weight of which no heart could ever truly know save her own.

At length, upon some inquiries that she herself had made respecting Jane Calvert, it was cautiously communicated to her that she had married Mr. Clink, and believed she should be as happy with him as their lives were long.

"Never!" she exclaimed,—"never! I feel this last blow deeply. Yet it is useless—very useless. I might as well persuade myself to be happy, only unhappily there is no such thing as a feeling left that will be persuaded. Mary!" And Miss Shirley approached her.

"Whoever you live with when I am gone,

be it with a woman. There is no faith in any else; and none in her sometimes. That Jenny Calvert now——Well, well,—I must see the young people—both of them,—and talk to them myself. Let them be asked up now, for I cannot sit in this chair much longer. I must see them."

Her wishes were shortly afterwards obeyed, and Colin and Jane were conducted into Mrs. Lupton's apartment.

"So you are married, Jenny?" said Mrs. Lupton, as she took the young wife by the hand and kissed her.

"I hope we shall always be very happy," replied she.

"So *I* hoped once," returned Mrs. Lupton; "and now see what has come of it! Yet I loved him just as you may now; only I found there were other women in the world besides me, just as I had persuaded myself that he thought me the only one. That may seem strange to you, but it is plain enough in itself,

and a sad thing to think on.—Well! as it is so, my dear,—love your husband: think him the best of men, living or dead,—the handsomest, — the kindest, — the most worthy, — the only man deserving of that curious treasure your whole heart. And even then, perhaps, though all this be done, — you may fail to be happy, as others have who have done quite as much before you. But it is best to do it, as being your duty before heaven and in your own conscience."

"And as for you, sir—" said she, addressing Colin, "look that you never despise what you once loved; that you do not take up as a jewel what you afterwards cast away as a stone. I have loved that girl from her childhood; and now she is married, I would not have you do as some men do. Take care of that. For if you do,—if you forget to look upon her when she expects you,—if you leave her as an unwelcome thing in her own house,—I tell you it will break her heart. I say you will break

her heart, — even as mine, — Heaven knows, — *is* broken !"

And so saying, Mrs. Lupton shrieked hysterically, and fell back insensible.

Grieved to the soul, Colin and his wife retired in tears, while Miss Shirley assisted in having the poor lady conveyed to her own room and laid in bed, where such restoratives were resorted to as her case seemed to require. When she had somewhat recovered—

"Walter !" she exclaimed—"Walter ! I want to see my husband."

After a while Mr. Lupton entered the chamber, and all present retired into an adjoining room.

"Walter !" said she faintly, "I am going— but I wish to tell you I die in peace—in *love* with you, even now. Very soon and I shall trouble you no more. But if I can come back to you, I will. I have loved and watched over you here—I will do so hereafter. You shall see me—but do not be afraid, for I would not in-

jure you even to gain heaven. Try to be good for the future, and then perhaps we may meet again. I have lost happiness here, but I hope for it to come. It is mine, I know it is! Heaven will not make me miserable for ever, as I have endured so much. Give me your hand — say one good kind word to me — nay, kiss me truly, and I am content. See you! There about the bed angels are asking me to come. I knew they would. I knew those blessed creatures would pity my misery, and wait for me when the gate of the Everlasting was opened. Heaven bless you — bless you!" And as she uttered those words the gripe of her hand on his became convulsive.

"*I will come again!*" she exclaimed with preternatural energy, as she strove to rise up towards her husband, but sunk back dying,— dead, in the effort.

If ever grief was in any house it was there on this occasion, when the death of Mrs. Lupton became known. All the household, as well as

those who were not of it, flocked round the bed whereon she was laid, to weep in truth and earnest heart over the corpse of one who had won all love from all but him who should have loved her most—though from him she had won it even at last when such love became useless. And if ever the living felt truly that the dead should be strewn with flowers—"sweets to the sweet,"—if ever it were felt that a funeral garment ought to be decked with the choicest offerings of the garden, and the melancholy grave be made beautiful,—assuredly was it felt then. Not one but felt that a friend was lost,—that an emptiness existed in the bosom unknown before, and never to be remedied; while some gave loose to that expression of grief which tells us that all hope was gone with the departed, and that the world had nothing more left in it for man to love, or by man to be beloved.

Amongst those latter must be numbered Mr. Lupton himself. The words of his dying wife

had sunk deep into his soul — too deep ever again to be eradicated. Misery had made him wise. Or, as Shakspeare has it—

> " Being gone,—
> The hand would call her back that pushed her on."

But it was now too late. Nature's fiat had been pronounced, and man was left to reconcile himself to her decree as best he might.

I shall not linger over this scene of death, save just to record how, during some days, the body lay in solemn state in a certain room always appropriated to that purpose; during which time it was looked upon by many eyes that grew dim as they gazed, and spoken of by many a voice that faltered and failed in the stifling effort to record the kindnesses and virtues of the dead.

Mr. Lupton, it was observed, frequently haunted that room alone. There lay a charm in it that he could not resist, and one that evidently day by day gained power upon his mind.

Amongst other signs of his having become in some respects a changed man, it was remarked that he gave strict orders that the private sitting room of the departed lady should not under any circumstances be disturbed, but that everything should remain exactly in the state in which she had last left it. And so it remained. The very work-table stood open as when last she had sat there; the snow-white muslin was thrown negligently upon it; and there also lay the opened book with which, in some perhaps painful moment, she had tried to beguile her weary heart, and to forget her own too real sorrows in the imaginary joys described of another.

At length the night for the interment came. The doors which opened into the court-yard, conducting to the little chapel, were thrown back upon their reluctant hinges, and, amidst the uncertain and mingled light and shadow produced by flickering torches, while all friends attended in a black and mournful troop, the corpse of the Lady of

Kiddal was carried in and laid in like state beside the similar remains of many a fanciful beauty and many a stalwart man who had laid down their beauty and their strength, and gone in there before her.

Some time ere midnight the solemn ceremony was concluded, and the grave doors were closed, not to be opened again, perhaps, until that widowed man who now walked slowly from them should himself return, and, with the tongue of death, demand a lodging there.

All gathered together in the great hall itself that night; and few, save those to whom it was absolutely necessary to visit other portions of the building, ventured out even with a light. The dead, somehow, seemed to pervade every place under the roof, to have become endued, as it were, with the principle of ubiquity, and to affright, with its presence, the air of the whole house. The servants fancied they heard noises and groanings, and took abundant pains to alarm one another with the most horrible

stories they could produce by the combination of memory and invention. Neither, at last, did they retire to bed until, by common consent, all had finished their work exactly at the same point of time, so as to enable them to make their transit, from the great kitchen to the top of the staircase, in one compact though small squadron.

Now, whether there be or be not any truth in the supposed appearance of such disembodied forms as were here evidently dreaded to be seen, I shall leave to the reader to determine for himself; but I am bound to relate a curious occurrence which took place during the night, as being—I can vouch for—a true part and parcel of this our history.

CHAPTER XVI.

Relates what happened to Mr. Lupton on the night of the funeral. — Together with some curious information respecting Longstaff, and Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Palethorpe.

It was late when Colin Clink and his wife retired to rest. Their apartment lay in a snug recess formed by the projection outside of two tower-like portions of the building, in one of which also his father's room was situated.

Setting aside all melancholy and superstitious influences arising from the mournful ceremony which, so short a time before, had taken place, the night seemed sad and forbidding in itself. When he looked a few moments from the window it was as though the blind, dead sky came

close to the panes. The landscape that lay far below appeared a black gulf, over which the soughing of the wind sounded like the fitful panting breath, the expiring complaints, of some vast unseen creature of the darkness, whose existence might thus be shadowed to the ear, though not to the eyes, of man. But when associated with the melancholy subject which weighed heavily on all hearts, its influence became far more sensibly felt ; and Colin could not but feel as though nature had conspired with death to impress the loss that had just been sustained more solemnly upon the mind.

During an hour or more after Mr. Lupton had retired, Colin indistinctly heard his footsteps as he paced restlessly up and down the room, musing, perhaps, on both long past and recent events, contrasting each, and planning how the actions of his life, could that race but be run over again, should assume a form

and regulation different, in many things, to those that had been.

Colin himself could not sleep, but lay awhile lost in thoughtful abstraction, until at length he was startled by the sound of heavier and more hasty feet in Mr. Lupton's chamber; just as though, in turning round, a man should suddenly encounter one whom he did not wish to see, and hastily fall back to avoid a closer meeting. A moment or two afterwards he heard a heavy fall upon the ground.

Our hero instantly leaped up and hurriedly dressed himself again; but before he had time to get out of his room, Mr. Lupton's bell had been rung, and his valet summoned to him. Finding such to be the case, Colin remained within his chamber. But shortly afterwards a knocking was heard at his door, and on opening it he found the valet standing in fear outside, and scarcely able to deliver in intelli-

gible language the message with which he was charged, desiring Colin, at Mr. Lupton's earnest request, to go into the other chamber to him immediately.

This, fearing something had happened, he accordingly did; and having bid the servant wait with a light in an unoccupied room not far off, shut the door after him.

Near the old fire-place, in which yet burned the last embers of what had been a comfortable fire, he found Mr. Lupton sitting in an antique carved arm-chair, with a marvellous appearance of composure, an expression of stillness that seemed almost unnatural, as though the finger of some awful event had been laid upon his vital powers, and had suddenly almost stopped them. It was as though his heart feared to beat or his lips to breathe. At the same time his flesh was ghastly white, his features were rigid, and his eyes dilated with an indescribable expression of terror.

"Are you ill, sir?" demanded Colin with

much concern. Mr. Lupton only pressed the hand of the young man, as if glad once more to lay hold of flesh and blood, and then drew him close to his side, by way of reply.

"I hope nothing has occurred?" again observed Colin. "But you are ill,—I see you are."

"No!"—at length stammered his father tremulously, "but—my boy—I—I—*have seen her!*"

And at the recollection of what he had seen, or fancied he had seen, he shook violently, as though every nerve in his body was shattered.

"Seen who, sir?" exclaimed Colin, though turning pale with the instant flash of consciousness that he *knew who*, as well as he that sat there unmanned and trembling.

"She has been back to me, true enough," said he again; and shaking his head just as might a man upon whom the awful doubt of an after-life has just been made a woful certainty,—a plain and demonstrative certainty,—

by the vision of an immateriality far more positive in itself, than the plainest of those whom Shelley has so finely described as

" The ghastly people of the realm of dream."

" Never heed it now, sir," rejoined the young man; " endeavour to calm yourself, and try to forget it."

" Forget it!" repeated Mr. Lupton incredulously: " never, — never! — Oh no, — no!" And as he spoke with more energy, and raised his voice in a pathetic manner as addressing some being unseen, he continued, — " Oh, my wife, my wife! — I am indeed wretched, very wretched!"

Again Colin endeavoured to persuade him out of this painful fear; but it was not until a considerable time had elapsed in these efforts that he even partially succeeded. Having, however, at length done so, he sat down beside his father and remained with him, engaged in serious conversation until daylight on the fol-

lowing morning. During that discourse it is believed Mr. Lupton informed his son of every particular touching the sight or the imagination which had thus affected him; but farther than that they were never made known. Mr. Lupton himself, during the whole remainder of his life, was never known upon any occasion even to allude to such a circumstance as having ever even happened; and no one ever ventured to speak of it before him. While Colin himself, who on various occasions was questioned by his friends as to the nature of the occurrences on that mysterious night, invariably returned this answer, "that if any supernatural revelation had been made to his father, to him alone it belonged to reveal it if he would: but as for himself, he could not have anything to do with the especial secrets and the bosom business of another individual."

This latter sentiment, however praiseworthy, I very strongly suspect to be but a variation of one which he had often heard, and had

picked up in the learned school of Mr. Peter Veriquear.

Deprived as the curious thus were and are of information in that direction, it yet became well known all over the country-side, some time afterwards, that Mr. Lupton had become remarkably serious very soon after his wife's death; and, unlike many in similar predicaments, from whom such conduct might more have been expected, had actually continued so ever since.

All the able theories that had been set afloat touching his second marriage, for everybody, who knew nothing about it, believed he would be married again, were found, day after day, and month after month, never to be carried out on his part by any corresponding action; so that at length the interested portion of the neighbourhood in this question were fain to give him credit for being a good widower, who could not find in his heart to marry again.

Another step also, which he subsequently

took, must be here recorded. After the occurrence of the important events so recently described, Colin's father would no longer think of permitting him and his wife again to leave the Hall and take up their residence elsewhere, as had originally been intended. Considering all things that had happened, and the state of his own feelings and sentiments thereon, Mr. Lupton now declared it to be his fixed intention to instal the young couple at once in that family residence, which he had already made provision for eventually bequeathing to them, and of having them considered as constituting, along with himself, the family and owners of the place. At the same time he expressed his earnest desire that his son Colin should take the management of his estates, as far as possible, into his own hands; to which end he devoted considerable pains to qualify him; observing that, however strange it might appear, he now felt but little interest in those matters which formerly had occupied

nearly all his attention, and that for the future he wished to devote his time to such study and pursuits as would be found more congenial with his feelings, as well as better adapted to fit him for that great change which in no very distant years he must undergo.

This arrangement being agreed to, and eventually acted upon, much to the satisfaction of all parties, Colin was soon looked upon as the greatest man in that parish where once we found him, a miserable child of misfortune, turned rudely out of his cradle at night, and sent by a hard-hearted steward to starve with his mother beneath the naked sky, or find a shelter under the poorest hovel of the fields.

As to that same steward, the notorious Mr. Longstaff, whom, it may be remembered, Colin's mother had once charged with having, in conjunction with his wife, been the cause of her betrayal and misfortune, he had now grown an old man, but still occupied the same

situation, now that Colin became his master, as he did when first the reader was introduced to him.

Prophecies sometimes come true; or, rather let me say, that observations made perhaps without a definite meaning, occasionally become prophetical as proved by the event. When Mr. Longstaff turned Mrs. Clink out of her house on the eventful night we have just alluded to, it will not perhaps have been forgotten that she pointed towards the little bed in which our then little hero lay, and addressing the steward, exclaimed, "*There's a sting in that cradle for you yet!*" Mr. Longstaff himself remembered these words, and trembled when he found to what influence and station the Squire had exalted his son. And though, I verily believe, notwithstanding his deserts, that Colin would never have molested him, but rather have forgiven and returned good for evil, yet, as though retributive justice was not to be turned aside, it oddly enough was

discovered by Colin and Mr. Lupton, on examining his accounts, that certain defalcations to a large extent and of long standing existed, and by the produce of which knavery it was supposed he had contrived to bribe a sufficient number of independent ten pounders in a neighbouring town to get his son, Mr. Chatham B. Longstaff, returned to Parliament, as well as to portion off his two daughters, Miss Æneasina Laxton and Miss Magota, on their respective marriages; one with a well-to-do musician, and the other a ditto draper and haberdasher.

On this discovery the steward was peremptorily discharged, on Mr. Lupton's authority, by Colin in person, and afterwards threatened with a prosecution. But as he made himself quite as humble as he had before been proud, said a great many pitiful things about the dignity of his family and the ruin of his character, as well as promised to pay the several sums back again, if not before, at least very soon after his son should have got a place

under Government, the Squire consented, under the influence of his son's persuasions, to let the old boy off and suffer the grievance to be hushed up by them, and misrepresented for the better by Mr. Longstaff himself and his clever family.

I am not certain, but to the best of my memory Mr. Longstaff eventually established himself as landlord of a small inn in a country town some sixty or seventy miles from the scene of his former exploits. For this duty, in fact, he was by nature quite as well, if not better qualified, than for some other of a more ambitious nature which he had previously taken upon himself.

To return to our more immediate friends, it is necessary now to state, that although Mr. Lupton had practically given up almost every power and authority connected with his own extensive establishment and estates, and placed them in the hands of his son, he yet deemed it his duty to continue those official duties con-

nected with the administration of justice which he had fulfilled during so long a period of years. Owing to this determination on his part it is that we stand indebted for a scene between two old and familiar acquaintances of the reader's, which otherwise we could not have enjoyed any possible opportunity of witnessing.

Some months had elapsed after the establishment of our hero in the house of his father, when, one day, as he was pacing up and down the lawn, with his wife upon his arm, he observed an unfortunate-looking woman, with a countenance deeply expressive of disappointment and indignation, advancing towards the Hall, and apparently from the direction of the Whinmoor-road. The harsh and half-prim, half-slatternly outline of the figure would instantly have assured him, even if other characteristics had failed, that in the individual who approached he beheld the never-to-be-forgotten Miss Sowersoft.

When sufficiently near to recognise her and

be recognised by her, she came to a full-stop, in order at a respectful distance to pass her compliments, and evince her good-breeding by courtesying very low, and muttering,

"Good morning to you, sir!"

"Good morning, Miss Sowersoft!" answered Colin.

Again she courtesied as she addressed Mrs. Jane with another "Good morning to you, ma'am!" She then continued,

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I am not Miss Sowersoft now. I am sure I never expected to say that I *regretted* being Mrs. Palethorpe!"

"Indeed!" exclaimed Colin. "How is that?"

"Oh, sir!" rejoined Mrs. Palethorpe, "I do not wish to remind you of those circumstances —unfortunate circumstances I am sure they were — which brought me into connexion with you in your juvenile days; but I am sure you cannot forget what a brute that man was from first to last: you must be aware that it was next

to impossible for anybody to live in the same house with him even at that time. But I have been a poor infatuated creature!" Here she began to cry. "Though I am paying dearly for it now! He is a sad man indeed!"

Colin now observed that his old mistress had very recently been favoured with a remarkably black eye.

"Does he ill-use you?" demanded Colin more seriously.

"He is a disgrace, sir,—though I say it that should not,—a disgrace and scandal to the name of man! I have come here, sir, I assure you, to see if the Squire will bind him over to keep the peace towards me; for only last night,—and it is his regular work now he is married, and master of the farm,—only last night he came down from Barwick as drunk as a lord, and he insisted on having a posset immediately. The fire was out, sir,"—Mrs. Palethorpe here wept afresh,—"and Dorothy was gone to bed."

Mrs. Palethorpe could not (for human nature will fail and sink sometimes) get any further.

Though Colin and Jane had much ado to forbear laughing at this account of her grievances, the former yet requested her to be comforted; and assured her that he had no doubt Mr. Lupton would very soon take such steps with Mr. Palethorpe as should effectually prevent him from resorting to personal violence for the future.

"As, I suppose," he continued, "this black eye is an evidence of some of his handiwork?"

"It is, sir!" exclaimed Mrs. Samuel, with passionate firmness. "I simply told him as gently as I could how circumstances stood, when he made no more to do than strike me two or three blows—he repeated them—in the face, and made me this figure, that I am ashamed of anybody seeing me!" And then she covered her face with her handkerchief.

Without farther parley, Colin now bade Mrs.

Palethorpe follow him, and led her into the presence of the Squire. That gentleman, for the first time since the death of his wife, was observed to smile when made acquainted with the poor woman's story. In the course of making out her case, she informed Mr. Lupton how, upon her visit with Palethorpe to London, she had somehow consented in a foolish moment to be married to him, immediately on their return; that, accordingly, that event had taken place at Barwick Church; how tipsy he got the first day of their wedding; how scandalously he had neglected everything since, except his drinking; and how abominably he had treated her almost from that very day up to the present moment.

As Mr. Lupton had previously been made familiar with the whole story of their love and their conduct by Colin, he did not feel any very deep grief at Mrs. Palethorpe's present case; though, at the same time, he rejoiced at the opportunity afforded him for

punishing as degraded and criminal a being as ever was brought before him. He accordingly issued a warrant for Palethorpe's apprehension, and during the same day had him brought up. When he made his appearance Colin was in the next room, and beheld a countenance more expressive at once of the ferocious brute and the sot than could probably be met with anywhere else throughout the country side. Mr. Palethorpe seemed indeed to have made himself so uncommonly glorious the night before, as to forestall all the glory of the ensuing forty-eight hours. His eyes had much the look of a couple of red coddled gooseberries, and his mouth that of one of those sun-made rifts which, during the dry summer-time he trod over in his own baked fallow fields.

"I didn't mean to hurt meesis!" said he, in reply to the complaint urged against him. "I was raither insinuated in drink when I did it."

"But you must be a most brutal fellow," replied the Squire, "to strike your own wife."

"I didn't want to marry her!" exclaimed Palethorpe. "She collyfugled me into it, by dint of likker and possets; and so she has herself to thank for 't!"

And on the delivery of this heroic sentiment Mr. Palethorpe stared at all present with the confidence of one who feels that the victory is already his. Unluckily for him, however, Mr. Lupton did not take that sort of logic as correspondent with law; but instead, ordered him to pay a crown for having been drunk, and committed him for a fortnight to that identical place to which the prisoner himself and his lady had once threatened to send Colin, — I mean York Castle, — for the assault upon his wife. In addition to this, it is perhaps scarcely necessary to add, he was bound in sureties to keep the peace towards all the King's subjects for the space of one year;—a restriction which not only materially

lessened the amount of domestic revolutions in the farm at Whinmoor, but also the number of physical outbreaks at the various pot-houses and village wakes throughout the surrounding neighbourhood.

Unblessed with any of those delightful little children to rear up and spoil, upon which she had so enthusiastically counted,—rendered still more crabbed than ever before by the lasting disappointment she had experienced, Mrs. Palethorpe passed a life of that peculiar kind of misery which has no parallel here on earth, but which any married couple desirous of testing may do so by carrying on against each other, in small matters as well as in great, an everlasting war of mutual annoyances and reprisals upon each other's happiness.

In other words, she and her husband, during their whole after journey through the world, regarded each other as the most mortal enemy that either had ever encountered.

CHAPTER XVII.

A village festival on a great occasion.—The woes of Mr. Peter Veriquear.

Could the good reader who has patiently travelled with me so far, and at length has reached the last milestone, as it were, upon our journey, could he, I repeat, have been present at Kiddal Hall, some five or six years later than the occurrence of the last described events, he would have seen a joyous sight. Once more did the old house look gay. A grand entertainment was given to all the surrounding residents, as well as the private friends of the occupants. Various gay devices adorned the walls; temporary bowers and archways trimmed with ribands and flowers, were

erected in the gardens; a flag waved gloriously from the topmost peak of the building; tables were spread over the green open space, in the middle of the village of Bramleigh; labour was laid aside, and every soul seemed to rejoice over the occasion of this holiday. It was May time. The pleasant farms seemed buried in the pink and white bloom of the orchards; the lilacs drooped over garden-walls, borne down by the weight of their own flowers; and the sunshine flecked with beautiful patches of light the hollow green lanes, which, throughout that rural district, formed a welcome substitute for the hard pavement and the unpicturesque dwellings of a great city.

By a special act on the part of Mr. Lupton, it had some time before been settled, that Colin and his wife should thenceforth take the family name, as though no other had been borne by them. This had accordingly been done; and therefore, I may now declare, that on this day (the happy day here spoken of) was celebrated the birth of the first son of Colin

and Jane Lupton. Already had they been blessed with two girls, that now had become by far the prettiest ornaments, the most beloved treasures, of the house. But the birth of a son was, as usual in similar cases, an event to be regarded with far greater interest, arising from circumstances which it would be superfluous to explain. Proudly did these two young and happy people walk amongst the tenantry, rejoicing in the earnest good wishes which were heard on every side, for their long life and continued happiness: though in one sense, more proudly still did the father of Colin himself look upon the generous homage thus paid them, and in the silent thankfulness of his own breast contemplate the rising and beautiful little family around him.

To add to the general joy of the friends assembled at the Hall, Mr. Roger Calvert and Fanny Woodruff, after a courtship of unaccountable duration, had selected that day also as their wedding-day; and now, along with the father of the latter, and the whole family of the

former, (for it is needless almost to say, that a reconciliation between them and Colin had long ago been effected,) joined at once in each other's pleasure, and that of the inhabitants of Kiddal.

One incident alone, which is worthy of particular record, occurred to cast a temporary sadness over this scene of festive rejoicing: an incident which, though it began in mirth, concluded with a brief tale of misfortune and endurance, which for some time afterwards caused Colin to forget his own happiness, in contemplating the misfortune and helpless poverty of one whom we may term an old acquaintance.

Somewhere about dusk in the evening, Colin walked forth into the village, for the purpose of witnessing the enjoyment of others; and amongst many other signs that all were happy and contented, he observed a knot of country bumpkins gathered round something which had attracted their attention in the middle of the highway, and that appeared to afford

them the highest degree of amusement, judging by the frequent and loud peals of boisterous laughter which broke from the assembled crowd. No sooner did the latter observe who approached, than they respectfully fell back, in order to allow him a sight of the object they had surrounded. Colin instantly perceived a man past the middle age, and, apparently, worn down by trouble and poverty combined, with a pack on his back, not unlike a travelling pedlar,—a stick in his hand to assist him in his progress, and a small, shaggy, wiry-haired terrier, cringing in alarm close at his heels.

The first sight of this odd figure was quite sufficient to assure Colin that he beheld no other than poor Peter Veriquear himself! Colin instantly ordered the people to stand back; and, to the amazement of all the clod-hoppers around, hurriedly seized him by the hand, with the exclamation —

"Mr. Veriquear!—Or is it possible I can be mistaken?"

"Whether you are mistaken or not," replied

the individual thus addressed, "is your own business and not mine. Just as it is my business to say I am very glad to see my old assistant, Mr. Colin Clink."

"But how,—under what strange circumstances have you come here, and in this manner?" demanded Colin.

"That," replied Peter, "you must be aware is my own concern and not yours. Though perhaps,"—and he paused a moment,—"perhaps I ought to make it my business to tell you all about it."

"Certainly," responded Colin, "for I can assure you, in your own language, that I feel it to be my business to know. But come," he continued, and at the same time motioning as though to lead him away,—"let me conduct you to better quarters than you will at present find in the village, and where we can talk over in a more private manner those things which I certainly feel somewhat anxious to hear."

To this proposal Mr. Veriquear at once assented, with the remark that as Mr. Clink made

it his own business to take him to good quarters, it could not possibly be any concern of his to object. And accordingly Mr. Peter Veriquear and his dog accompanied Colin to Kiddal Hall, where the first-named gentleman soon found himself seated at a plentiful table in the great kitchen, while the companion of his travels was accommodated, much to his satisfaction, with equally as abundant a meal provided for him at the entrance to an empty kennel which stood in the court-yard.

When Peter had sufficiently satisfied himself after this fashion, he attended the summons of the friend who assuredly in former times had been indebted to him, and was conducted into a private room where Colin had proposed to meet him alone.

"Ah, sir!" said Peter, as he took a chair and placed himself over against Colin, "you will feel quite as much astonished to find me sunk so low, as I am to see how high you have risen. Though to be sure," he continued hesitatingly, "it is your business to be aston-

ished at me, as it is mine to do the same by you."

"Why, what can possibly have happened?" asked the other.

"Sad things!" replied Peter. In the first place, I have lost every one—there is not a single soul left—of all my family. Mrs. Veriquear,—the little Veriquears that you used to take such pleasure in drawing about in the coach,—all have been taken away from me. One of those horrible fevers which it is the business of Providence sometimes to send into the heart of a great city like that in which I lived, laid them down almost all together on beds of sickness. They lay ill for some time, during which the doctor made it his affair to physic them so much that the stock of bottles in my warehouse was very materially increased. At the same time the rag trade was torn to rags by competition; while the "rents" became bigger every year in proportion. One after another the family dropped off; until really, grieved as I was, I could not help thinking that the

undertaker did nothing in the world else but make it his business to go backwards and forwards from his own house to mine."

Colin scarcely knew in what manner to reply to this statement, as it would have raised a smile on the face of Pity herself; but by dint of considerable efforts he contrived to look sufficiently grave, and bid Mr. Veriquear proceed.

"The consequence of all this was that nearly everything I had saved to keep my family alive, was spent in putting them into the ground. The marrow, as I may say, of my bone of fortune was picked out, and my poverty was left with scarcely a rag to cover her. However, I thought it my best way to bottle up my complaints; and since Providence had made it her business to visit me with afflictions, I would make it mine to endure as patiently as I could."

"A worthy resolution!" observed his auditor, "and very highly to your credit."

"However," continued Peter, "after these misfortunes were over, my old house seemed such a desert to me that I could not endure it.

Everywhere it appeared that I ought to meet one or other of them, and yet I was always disappointed,—always alone! Used to having those little people for ever about my feet,—to feed them at my table,—to talk about them to my wife,—to think how I should dispose of them as they grew up, and speculate on their luck in after-life,—and thus suddenly to be deprived of them all,—to have all swept away,—not one left,—not a solitary one! to be myself the only one where there had been many,—I assure you, sir, that sometimes I felt terrified at my own shadow as it chased along the wall by lamplight, and seemed to reproach me with being the only creature left there alive. I could have fancied myself like a solitary spider in a huge closet of a house without any other tenant, and that has nothing to do but sit in the heart of its own web, silently waiting and waiting for other living things besides itself, which never come, until at length it withers imperceptibly, and is found dead in its home by some visiter at last."

Peter's feelings had now made him too eloquent even for himself, and certain hard tears which appeared to be looking about for, and puzzled to find a furrow to run in, scrambled oddly down his cheeks.

"The place," he continued, "made me nervous. Sometimes I fancied I heard the voices of my children crying above stairs, or below, or laughing in the yard. I have even been foolish enough, weak enough, to make it my business to go up or down sometimes to see. The little chairs and stools were there, or, perhaps, the playthings I had once chidden them for breaking. How I then regretted it! Could I have had them back again, they might have pulled my very house to pieces, but I should have been a happy man! If you have children, sir, may you never lose them as I have done!"

Colin could not but feel Mr. Veriquear's words, while he requested him to conclude his narrative.

"At last," added Peter, "I made it my business to dispose of my business, and sell all

off I had. And though it was a good deal to look at, it produced me little money. However, as I could no longer endure the place, I made the best of the case I could, and resolved to travel back to the place where I originally came from, and pass the rest of my life there, without any other attempt to make my fortune."

"And, pray, Mr. Veriquear," asked his entertainer, "in what part of the country may that be?"

"I was born," answered Peter, "in one of the Orkney Islands, and am now going back on foot, as you see me; only as I supposed very possibly I might find you here, or, at least, hear something of you, I came partly out of my way in order to do so; and, in fact, I was making inquiries of those clowns at the very time that you made it your business to come up to me."

Mr. Colin Lupton certainly felt more on hearing this story than he expressed in words to the relater of it. But by his actions its

effect upon him may be judged, as he insisted on poor Peter being well lodged for the night, and before his departure on the following day, made him such a present as, most probably, would entitle him to be considered a man of some small substance in the little Orkney Island, towards which he shortly afterwards finally steered his course.

Having now brought the fortunes of most of the principal characters who have figured in these pages to a close, it only remains for me to relate some few stray scraps of information upon subjects on which the reader may not now feel fully satisfied.

It will, perhaps, be remembered, that the last time we parted with Doctor Rowel, — that infamous agent in as infamous a description of practice as ever man carried on and escaped the gallows, — we left him in a state of high mental excitement, bound in his carriage and conveyed by his friends to the house of his brother, on the borders of Sherwood forest. To reduce that excitement, or

even to prevent its eventually increasing to a state of violent and confirmed madness, all medicine, restraint, or care, was found unavailing; and, eventually, he was confined for life in a public institution for the reception of demented individuals. There he raved almost continually about an imaginary skeleton, in an imaginary box, which he supposed to be placed close to his bedside. He declared it lied for having told such tales of him; and often gave utterance to certain unintelligible jargon, wherein the names of Woodruff, of his sister Frances, and of his niece, were mingled in curious confusion. Sometimes he would roll on the ground, and cry out, as though some powerful hand was on his throat, and a weight upon his breast — telling, almost, that the fearful struggle between his former prisoner and himself, yet retained doubtful hold upon his mind, and yet occasionally punished him over again, more severely perhaps than even at the period of its actual occurrence. Altogether he continued to exhibit to the very last

a picture of misery and horror, not easily, even if it were needful, to be described.

With respect to Mrs. Lupton's early friend, Miss Mary Shirley, her entire devotion to that unfortunate lady, through a long period of years, the tenderness with which she had comforted her in her afflictions, and the constancy with which she had maintained the spirits of that unhappy wife, endeared her to all who in the least were acquainted with her merits. For a while she took upon herself, at Mrs. Jane's earnest entreaty, and in conjunction with herself, the management of Colin's little family.

THE END.

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